10¢

DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

NOV. 15, 1923 NO. 144

.....FEATURE.....
DETECTIVE STORY

Phantom Fingers

by

GEORGE BRONSON-HOWARD

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. VI NOVEMBER 15, 1923 No. 144

ISSUED TWICE A MONTH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FEATURE STORY

PHANTOM FINGERS. By George Bronson-Howard 3

SERIAL STORY

THE CURSE OF NADIR—PART ONE. By Edwin A. Goewey 45

SHORT STORIES

THE MING GOW JURY. By Neil McConlogue 23
RUN TO EARTH. By Schuyler Hamilton 29
TEN NOTORIOUS CRIMINALS. By Carl H. Getz 33
FIVE DEUCES. By Lloyd Lonergan 38
WHO PLAYS WITH FIRE. By Douglas M. Dold 52

MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES

STEAL GEMS WORTH $10,000 37
A DEADLY DUEL 51

Copyright, 1923, by Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d St., New York. All rights reserved. Entered as Second-Class Matter November 5, 1917, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Published by Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d St., New York.

Harry E. Wolff, President; L. F. Wilzin, Treasurer; Charles E. Nylander, Secretary.

LU. SENARENS, Editor.

Notice.—No letters will be answered or manuscripts returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. The publishers disclaim responsibility for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts. Authors to save time will please name price desired for submitted material.

Subscription Price: Domestic, Single Copy, 10 Cents; Domestic, Yearly, $2.50; Canada, $2.75; Foreign, $3.00.

All remittances should be sent by express money order, P. O. order, check, registered letter, or draft to insure safety. We will not be responsible for money sent otherwise.

Another Great Number Coming

Watch for our next issue. Don't miss it. Like the two preceding, it is going to be a genuine top-notcher. The feature detective story is equally as good as the one in this issue, and the short stories and articles and miscellaneous matter are even better!

Frank Blighton

wrote the feature story, entitled

"ON THE YELLOWS"

This author is one of the best writers of detective fiction in the world. His work is in all the biggest and best magazines on the newsstands. That shows you how good his stories are. This detective novelette is his very best effort. Read it.

Neil McConlogue

has written another of the "Gutterside" series for us, called

"THE MATE OF THE 'MOOSE'"

You will thoroughly enjoy the excitement in this powerful detective story.

Edwin A. Goewey

is author of the fascinating new serial

"THE CURSE OF NADIR"

A story full of pep and seething with interest. There's a mystery in it that grips, enchants and pleases.

We do not wish to boast about the fine quality of the short stories you are going to get in the next issue, but ask you to read them and judge for yourself if they aren't the best sketches you ever read. There's a story by HAMILTON CRAIGIE filled with heart-interest—the story of a policeman who made a man of a crook. The title is

"MAN TO MAN"

Next, ROBERT RUSSELL'S splendid detective story with a plot that cannot fail to rivet your entire attention when you read

"PETER'S PRETTY PLAY"

Then, we will have a story of crooked work in India, written by HUGH THOMASON—a story breathing all the romantic charm of the Orient under the title

"THE TIGER-EYE EMERALD"

In addition there will be no end of interesting short items and a splendid article by ALLAN VAN HOESEN, showing how many crooks come to grief through neglect of seemingly unimportant little things when they commit crimes. The title is

"TRIFLING SLIPS TRIP MOST CROOKS"

REMEMBER! Our next issue will contain the biggest and best Ten Cents' worth you ever bought, and be sure to get a copy!

THE EDITOR

PHANTOM FINGERS

by George Bronson-Howard

CHAPTER ONE

HOW THE LAW CAME TO HORNBY HOUSE

"UNDER *arrest!*" gasped Horace Levering Hornby, M.A., D.Sc., Ph.D., of Hopkins, Oxford, and Harvard, whose monographs on criminology had done away with the last vestiges of belief in Lavater and Lombroso. "Under arrest for *what?* Is this some insane sort of joke?"

The expressions that chased one another across his face would have made him ludicrous if the affair itself had not been little short of tragedy. It was evident from the looks of one of his captors that it was an extremely distasteful affair to him.

Silently this one, the younger and more intelligent-looking of the twain, handed him their warrant. Doctor Hornby read it incredulously, sputtering over a phrase here and there.

"'Alias "Phantom Fingers"' . . . for breaking and entering the houses of Mordaunt Carruthers, J. M. Simpson, Junie Marron, Edwin K. Elwyn, H. Henry Estabrook, Patrick Mosely Peterson . . . on the night of September seventeenth, Nineteen twenty-two.' Look, Honor, look! Why, it's incredible! It can't be! It's impossible, absurd! I can't, and I won't believe such a mistake is possible. I——"

"Just one moment, Doctor," interrupted the younger captor, retrieving his warrant from the professor's sister, Miss Honoria Hornby, who, after a single glance, had let it flutter to the floor. She stared speechlessly from her brother to the speaker. "Just one single moment. If you happen to have a perfectly good alibi tucked away somewhere as to where you were on that particular night between the hours of 10 p. m. and 4 a. m., it'll give me the greatest pleasure to act on my own initiative and take back this warrant unexecuted. Hey, Jim?"

James O'Carroll, the heavy-set, big-jowled "strong-arm," who was the slighter detective's running mate, scowled before nodding more than ungraciously.

"How about it, Doc?" asked O'Carroll insinuatingly. "Believe me, this is no pleasant job for us."

He eyed the doctor of science and philosophy expectantly.

"The night of September seventeenth," muttered Hornby, and it was instantly evident that he was all aghast. "That was day before yesterday, Honor. Do you remember——"

"Y'ain't warned him yet that anything he says will be used agin him," interpolated

Detective O'Carroll, watching the brother and sister. The latter, heeding the interpolation as kindly, made a low-voiced request:

"May I speak to my brother, privately, for a moment?"

"You may, ma'am," answered the young sleuth readily, and Detective-Lieutenant Fayne motioned to his subordinate to step into the hallway, closing the door behind them.

"Horry," whispered the accused man's sister, allowing her agitation to become evident at their departure, "do you realize that was one of the nights when you were absent for hours? Think!"

"I have thought," was his reply. "It was the night of the Hunt Club Ball. I remember dropping into the club for a few moments and seeing every one in 'pinks,' or in evening dress. Then I recalled what the affair was, and being in tweed knickers and a Norfolk, I instantly stepped out by a side door."

"Yes. And then?"

"Then? Then?" He passed one hand over his perspiration-bespangled forehead. "Why, then, then—then I—it was just one of those nights when I took one of those long, solitary rambles. I was perplexed by a knotty problem of phrenology versus psychology, so to speak; it was one of those syntheses in the sixteenth chapter of my projected 'Psycho-Criminalis' text-book—and a damned difficult one to translate from academic technique into terms of popular understanding. You know what happens when I'm absorbed that way—a type of auto-hypnosis ensues. The quiet of the night, the bracing air of the countryside are my most efficient stimuli. I did not come out of my intense absorption until I had successfully solved the problem, completed my synthesis, and stated it in easily understood phraseology. A glance at my wrist watch's radio-lit dial showed the time as three o'clock, and when I began to retrace my steps the first cross-roads finger-post told me I was nearly twelve miles away from Hornby House. It was therefore long past sunrise before I got back, and nearly six o'clock before I was in bed."

"I know," was her horror-stricken rejoinder. "The birds always wake me up around five, and I rise to close the windows so that I can get a second doze. And I saw you come limping in around half-past five. Horry, this is terrible, terrible! Didn't you see anybody while you were walking? Between the time you left the club and returned here, didn't you see anybody?"

"No one I knew," he replied, sinking into a chair. "Only that car that tore past me at such a rate of speed that it would have been impossible to recognize any one in it, no matter how well I might know them. It was just after that I picked up that amaranth pendant you are wearing now."

He pointed to the long slender jewel that hung suspended by the thinnest of platinum chains—a curious crystalline formation, its shape that of an exceedingly slender and elongated pear, as ruddy as the afterglow of a tropical sunset.

Suddenly she clutched it.

"Why—why—Mrs. Edwin K. Elwyn was asking me about this jewel only this afternoon at tea. As to where I got it—and how—and everything. Oh, Horry! I had no right to wear it without asking your permission. I hadn't seen it before; I knew nothing about it until you told me you had found it, after I came back. Oh, if only I hadn't—hadn't——"

"But I would have given you permission if you *had* asked me. Didn't I give it to you when I saw how wonderfully decorative it was when you wore it? I had meant to give it you the moment I saw you, but next day it slipped my mind, and it just lay there in the jewel-case on my dressing-table, absolutely forgotten."

A knock on the hall door reminded them of the pressing nature of the detectives' call.

"Come," he answered, and Fayne re-entered with his subordinate. The detective-lieutenant's face was still expectant. He looked his inquiry as he crossed the big Bokhara rug in the centre of the drawing-room, beyond which brother and sister stood.

"I have no 'alibi' for that particular night," stated Hornby, his tone cold and his

lips and cheeks pale. "I have no one to verify my own account of my actions between the time I left the Hunt Club at an hour approximately ten and my return to my own place somewhere around sunrise. I can recall seeing no one between those times."

"No?" suddenly barked O'Carroll. "But some one saw you, Doctor Hornby! One of the chauffeurs at Mr. M. Carruthers saw you cut through the lane leading away from the Carruthers house when he returned from taking the family to the ball. He was going to call to you that there was nobody home when he saw you were coming *away* from the house, not going *towards* it. That was about ten-thirty."

"Yes," agreed Hornby, finding some difficulty in articulating with his frozen lips; "yes, I always take that short-cut through the woods when I'm out on one of my nocturnal rambles."

"Nocturnal rambles," repeated Fayne abruptly. "You mean you're in the habit of strolling the countryside in the small hours of the morning, as a general rule?"

"No, no, no!" interrupted the tortured Honoria. "Not as a general rule, officer. He only does that when he's worried about his writing. He has to get away from everybody and think. And he does that best when he's strolling by himself along these forests. This was the third time in eight days that he was out strolling—the third and last."

"Ye-ah! It'll probably be his last," O'Carroll interpolated. Fayne turned on him angrily.

"Leave the room, O'Carroll. Remain within hearing. I'll call for you if you're wanted. Don't come in unless I call. You have made yourself extremely officious and obnoxious in this particular case. Accept my apologies for his bad manners, madam." Fayne bowed to Honoria.

"You had better take these, then," was O'Carroll's sulky return as he fished out a pair of handcuffs. Honoria Hornby reached out a protecting arm, which encircled her brother's shoulders. Fayne pushed back the outstretched hand that held the circlets of steel, then shoved back the offending owner.

"Put 'em back and get out of here," he said harshly. "The next time I bring you on a delicate case—— Into the hall!"

O'Carroll went, casting ugly oblique glances behind him. He was the sort that rejoices in the small authority given into his hands by the law, which allows him to humble one of superior attainments in their moments of helplessness.

Fayne was of the type that is genuinely grieved when compelled to take into custody some one for whose character and achievements he has a real respect and regard. He was anxious for Hornby to have every chance of clearing himself; hoped, before carrying him off, as his duty compelled him to do, that he could grasp some clue that would enable him to prove the other's innocence in the end.

"Now, Miss Hornby, please sit down," he implored the distraught girl. "And, Doctor, kindly do the same. Collect yourself, sir. Don't pay any attention to what that infernal assistant of mine said. I'm going to try to explain just what the reason for your arrest is, or, rather, the reasons. You may be sure we were never sent after a man of your standing on the unsupported word of a chauffeur."

He spoke slowly and carefully, almost academically, enunciating every word precisely. For Fayne was a book-taught man and had two modes of speech: one the "rough stuff" argot of his earlier years, the other an imitation of the text of the books he had read. The first style he used when in the company of such men as O'Carroll. His second style he reserved for his superiors in office and for those he instinctively knew to be his superiors in fact.

He had first encountered Dr. Horace Levering Hornby when he wished to learn something of the *how* and *why* of crime, both generically and specifically.

For Hornby was probably the greatest American authority on criminology the second decade of the twentieth century had produced.

Having gone to him before as a pupil, it was unlikely his attitude should alter ma-

terially merely because an accident of fate had put him in the category of the accused.

"Now, Doctor," said Fayne, availing himself of the cigarettes offered by Honoria and passing on the silver box with the glass top to the man he addressed, "the actual reason for your arrest is before your eyes—before mine, too. It is being worn by Miss Hornby."

Honoria clutched at the elongated pear-shaped pendant.

"I notice that Miss Hornby realizes that this is a piece of concrete circumstantial evidence. Were you also aware of its damning quality, Doctor Hornby?"

"Not until after you announced your intention of arresting me," answered the doctor of science and philosophy in the same sort of dazed voice he had used ever since the event he referred to occurred. "My sister remembered that Mrs. Edwin K. Elwyn had been overly interested in that particular pendant and had conducted a searching inquiry as to where it came from and how it fell into her hands. Honoria knew nothing of it except that she had seen it in my jewel-box on my dressing-table, had fancied it as the final touch to that black crape frock shot with vermilion threads, which she wore to the Elwyn house, and had substituted it for the one she was wearing. It wasn't until she returned home and asked me that she learned how and where I got it."

He repeated almost word for word the exact explanation of how he found the jewel that he had given his sister at the time.

"Well, that's that," he concluded slowly as he noted with growing apprehension the clouded countenance of Fayne. "Now, as your companion says, I was seen *apparently leaving* the Carruthers house at a time when every one was out. For the family had gone to the Hunt ball and the servants' quarters are above the new brick structure, that combination stable and garage. And, as you very likely know, doors and windors are very seldom locked in the valley, and any one as familiar with the Carruthers house as I am could have entered. Granting their ability to open the Carruthers safe, they could have walked out again with any amount of jewelry without in any way acting like a suspicious character on the outside of the house. You see," he added, smiling for the first time, "I am analyzing the case as if it were another's and helping to add to the incriminting evidence against me. I suppose, naturally enough, that this pendant my sister is wearing is part of the loot taken from the Elwyn house?"

Fayne nodded gloomily.

"Then there's a third piece of circumstantial stuff. Of course, it's all easily enough explained if one knows about your habit of taking these night strolls—nocturnal strolls, you said, didn't you? This one," he continued, "is from Miss Junie Marron's maid, who was waiting up for her mistress to return from the ball. She saw you hurrying away. According to her, you came around from the back of the house and hustled off into the woods. That would be somewhere around about four o'clock, for Miss Marron came in at a quarter after the hour, and the discovery of the burglary was made soon after, when the maid went to put the string of pearls her mistress had been wearing back into the safe."

"But how did the maid recognize *me?*" inquired Doctor Hornby. "According to her, I must have been some distance away, and I only passed through a few patches of moonlight. At all times my back must have been to her."

Fayne looked gloomier than ever. "Be careful what you are saying, Doctor. You're practically admitting, before I make any attempt to prove it, that you did come by Miss Marron's house, just in the way I've described it."

"Well, so I did," answered Hornby listlessly. "That is another of my short-cuts—through the Marron wood-lot, up by the footpath that leads to the spring, and parallels the syringas at the north side of the house. One must walk close to the side of the house to avoid stepping into the flower-beds. So I have no doubt that any one, suspecting a crime had been committed, would have seen in my apparently furtive keeping-to-the-shadow-of-the-house manner

a practical confession of having just slipped out at the rear with the loot on my person. But you haven't yet explained how she recognized me."

"You're making too much of an abstract case out of this, doctor," warned Fayne. "Good thing for you I'm your friend and that I sent that would-be Hawkshaw of mine out of the room while I talked to you. Now, of course, I know you're innocent. The fact that your sister wore that jewel to Mrs. Elwyn's tea, and that you allowed her to go on wearing it after she returned here, and that you made no effort to get her to hide it when we were announced—that alone is enough to convince any real practical honest-to-God bull, not to mention your standing in the community, your adequate income, your professional status—everything to lose and damn little to gain—unless"—and here he dropped his voice and hitched his chair closer—"you did this apparently almost impossible series of 'touches'—six in four hours—as a sort of object lesson, a practical demonstration of some theory, and have already arranged, and can prove it, to return everything that was taken. Now if that's the case——"

Fayne's eyes sparkled at the idea. Again he looked expectant. Doctor Horace Levering Hornby shook his head sadly.

"But it isn't that. Now tell me how the maid recognized me."

But for the presence of Miss Hornby Fayne would have relieved his feelings with a violent expletive.

"Since that's what you're so anxious to know, Doc, she didn't. She only said 'a man.' But his shadow was bobbing ahead of him, magnified in the moonlight to something like four times its natural size."

Hornby shook his head, for he realized that he had admitted his identity on the scene of the crime.

Fayne was plainly incensed. "Confound it, Doc, this ain't a case brought you for analysis. This is yourself that's being pinched. Well, let me finish about that maid. I told you this shadow of your head was magnified in the moonlight. And as you happen to wear a peculiar piece of headgear, the only one of its kind in these parts, why, she just naturally recalled that high-pointed, narrow-brimmed Tyrolese hat with the cock's feather; she called it a 'devil's hat.' If you recall, the devil is often pictured wearing such a one. As soon as she pulled the hat stuff I knew it was you she meant."

"I see," said Hornby.

"Well," concluded the detective, "that's all the tangible evidence, Doctor. I guess you'd better get your hat and coat and toothbrush and cigarettes and any other little things you may need. And perhaps you'd better telephone to your lawyers and whoever you think is willing to go your bail. I'm thinking he'll need to be a good friend. 'Breaking and entering, burglary in the first, grand larceny' and what-not calls for pretty stiff bail if they allow bail at all. Sorry to take you away from your sister, but, as I pointed out, Doc, you're pinched."

CHAPTER TWO

HOW ALAN ARDICK CAME INTO THE CASE

IT was after ten o'clock the next morning when Alan Ardick reached the cubbyhole he called "his office" and began looking over his mail. Without exception, this consisted entirely of bills. Most of these he disposed of without opening at all, simply by glancing at the tradesman's name in the upper left-hand corner, or on the flap, of the envelope.

But the final one was not so easily disposed of. It was from the superintendent of the building in which his office was situated, and it called upon him in terms anything but uncertain to pay up or get out.

Ardick's assets at the time were limited to a few bills in a folder in an inner pocket and some loose change in his trousers. As the notice from the superintendent informed him that it was a mere formality, shortly to be followed by a legal dispossession, unless the office were vacated by that time on the following day, Alan Ardick sighed heavily. He crossed the room and unearthed from behind some legal-looking volumes his most

friendly enemy or most inimical friend—his sole remaining treasure—a squat, authenticated, white-sealed, properly aged bottle of Highland Dew.

He hastily took a drink and hid the bottle. Then there came the sound of a voice behind him:

"Is this Mr. Alan Ardick?"

There was a quality to the voice, at once so appealing, yet so well-bred, so self-controlled—for all it was apparent that its owner was in sad straits—that it swept its way through the maze of indifference, despair, carelessness, and self-distrust that had begun to serve Alan Ardick as a sort of aura.

A pair of sad, earnest eyes, with irises the color of wild violets, looked out of a pale, drawn young face framed by ash-gold hair, and he saw how pretty she was.

"Horace always said you were the most promising of his pupils," the voice went on. "And I happened to remember your name associated with that famous Derthwiler case; you solved it, didn't you? So when I went to my brother this morning—they wouldn't admit him to bail—and suggested your name, he told me 'for God's sake to find you.' Those were his very words—'For God's sake, find Ardick. Since they won't let me go free to work on my own case, Alan Ardick is the best proxy I can find. If anybody can get to the bottom of this infernal imbroglio, he's the man.' And then——"

Her voice trembled. "Will you be too much annoyed, or insulted, or angry if I tell you what Detective-Lieutenant Mark Fayne said when he heard my brother telling me this?"

Alan's voice was trembling, too. "N-n-no," he answered. "N-n-no! What did"—a strain of bitterness came into his voice—"what did the successful Mark Fayne say about the failure, Alan Ardick?"

"He said"—her voice was trembling more than ever now—"he said: 'Yes, if——'" Again she hesitated. "If——" This time she came to a dead halt. "Oh, he was unfair, unfair. I can't tell you what he said, after all. I don't believe him, anyhow. I know my brother was right."

"Shall I spare you the fear of annoying, insulting, or making me angry by telling you just what he said myself—to show you that I have passed the stage where I *can* be insulted, annoyed, or made angry by something everybody seems to know?"

She made an inarticulate protest. He disregarded it.

"He said: 'If he keeps sober. If he *can* keep sober.'" She turned her head away. "Right, wasn't I?" She swayed a little as she stood. He was stricken into sudden penitence.

"What a brute I am keeping you standing while my ego concentrates on myself in the usual consolation of the failure—self-pity. Please sit down."

She sat as she made another protest. "You shan't keep calling yourself that. My brother said you were the most promising of his pupils. That means more than what all the rest of them say. The only fear is that they've convinced you that you *are* a failure. But you aren't. I won't let you be. Horace said——"

"Just a moment, please." He was trying to clear his head of the mist that drink had raised about his memory. "Please tell me your name."

She told him. "Honoria Hornby," he repeated. "And Horace is your brother. Then you mean my old science professor—by which I mean the youngest one I ever had—of old King's College. Taught psychology and applied economics, too. Horace Levering Hornby. Now the renowned criminologist. Is that who you mean by 'Horace'?" She said it was.

He nodded. The mist was clearing away from his memory. "Yes, he gave me my first taste of crime analysis. Made that old fraud Lavater, and his final apotheosis, that permanent mental casualty, Lombroso, look like last year's weather reports. He taught 'applied criminology,' as he used to call it, to a select few of the 'applied economics' classes. Used to meet at his rooms down at Cyprus. Where were you those days? Oh, I remember; he had a little sister at Goucher, didn't he?"

"It doesn't matter about me," she said hurriedly. "He believes you are the only

one to help him now. When I recalled the Derthwiler case, on which you worked—and which you solved—even Lieutenant Fayne had to admit you were wonderful. Not that *he* said so."

"Catch him!" was Alan's grim response.

"But you mustn't be angry with Mr. Fayne, please. He's on Horry's side, too. He doesn't believe Horry did it. He even says he'll be glad to work on it with you——"

" 'If I keep sober,' " was the second grim response. "But just a moment; I may be getting things mixed. 'He doesn't believe Horry did'—what? I'm afraid I don't understand."

"You haven't read this morning's paper, then, have you?"

"I'm—I'm—ashamed to confess it, Miss Hornby. But I—I haven't read a morning paper for at least a week. In fact, this is my first morning at the office in eight days. Do you understand—in eight days."

"You've been—ill, you mean?" She colored faintly.

"Very ill," he returned grimly again. "Better put it 'I've been acting very ill.' Bluntly"—he drove himself to say it, but he could not meet her eyes—"I've been drunk part of the time, getting over it the other part. In a city hospital—the alcoholic ward. My finances don't run to private rooms in private hospitals any more. This particular performance has been repeated too often. Once too often, I'm afraid, for any use I can be to you."

Her color was no longer faint, but high.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself to talk to me like that?"

"Very much ashamed," he broke in. "But I wanted you to see how hopeless it was to expect any help from such a drunken failure as myself. I've had my chances and I've wasted them."

"That's what I mean when I ask you if you aren't ashamed to talk to me like that? Remember, my brother in jail sees in you his only real hope. He sends his sister to you for help only to have you say it's hopeless to expect any help from you. Do you mean you don't intend to try, or won't?"

The whiplash of her scorn had stung him. Now the broken pleading of her last few words plucked at his heart-strings again. He mouthed one of her phrases, a seemingly un-understandable one.

"*Your brother in jail?* You mean you have another brother besides Doctor Horace Levering Hornby?"

"No, I—I—haven't. It's Horry—who——" She thrust the morning paper at him. "It's there. It's incredible, I know. But it's happened. That's all there is to it. *It has happened.* Read it. I—I couldn't—tell you—all at once—without breaking down."

The amazed eyes of Alan Ardick, erstwhile star reporter for the Baltimore *Morning Chronicle,* some time "Special Investigator" for the police, leaped to the headlines that captioned the sort of story he had been accustomed to write himself when he had been "headquarters man" for this very paper.

But he had never had the luck to write so astounding a tale as the one set forth in the two-column double-display head that had elbowed that much international and intercontinental news off the front page.

"Phantom Fingers," to begin with. The master of mystery who, having burst into the world news with a Cycle of Six crimes of high degree all committed between the sunset and sunrise of the sixteenth night of May, had gone undetected by the star crook-hunters of the Atlantic coast for close upon six months. Only to burgeon out again with another Cycle of Six on the night of the sixteenth of September.

And this mysterious crook was now arrested in the person of Horace Levering Hornby, internationally renowned as a criminologist, instructor of the police themselves when knotty problems were to be solved.

Identified by several witnesses who had seen him leaving the scenes of two of his rapid-fire burglarious grand larcenies on the night in question.

Unable to produce anything in the nature of an alibi.

Betrayed, unwittingly, by his sister, Miss Honoria Hornby, who, finding a certain valuable amaranth pendant which he had

unwisely allowed to get mixed up with his own personal jewelry, had worn it to a tea given by its owner, one of the victims of No. 2 Cycle of Six—one Mrs. Edwin K. Elwyn, by whom it was immediately identified.

Arrest made by Detective-Lieutenant Fayne, who, however, was by no means sure he had got the right man, circumstantial evidence to the contrary or not.

"Good man, Fayne," muttered Alan Ardick. Then his anger kindled. "Why, it's utterly preposterous. It's so absolutely absurd it's hardly worth confuting. If it wasn't so darned tragic it would be a silly joke."

"But he *is* in jail," came to him from behind a scrap of lace and linen handkerchief and between sobs.

"It can't be, I tell you," stormed Alan.

"And they wo-won't ac-cept bail," mourned Honoria Hornby. "And he says if anybody can help him it's y-y-you. And y-y-you say you w-w-won't even try."

"I didn't," denied the now indignant Alan. "I never said such a thing in my life. He believes in me. That's enough. No, no, it isn't, either." Suddenly he caught both her wrists.

"Look here," he demanded. "Can you—you—possibly believe in me, too? Tell the truth now."

And when she had nodded as she wept he suddenly inflated his chest, reached for his hat, and assisted her to her feet.

"Well, that makes three of us, then. For, damned if I'm not willing to believe in myself—in such company."

CHAPTER THREE

WHERE Alan Ardick was more than a match for most of his fellow-investigators of crime was his uncanny aptness for reading the human motive into almost every detail of a lawless deed. His conversation of that evening with the sister of the accused only went to confirm what had flashed into his mind during his conversation with Mark Fayne.

The detective meant to convince the girl that appearances were so terribly against her brother that it was almost a foregone conclusion that he would be convicted unless something almost superhuman was done to save him.

He could not make up his mind whether Fayne considered Hornby guilty or not. But it was certain that he was not going to do anything to make him appear so. Although he might not be able to clear Hornby's name, he could at least save him from a conviction, leaving the burden of proof to the prosecutor. Which under present circumstances, if they unearthed no further evidence against the doctor of science and philosophy, would very probably result in that smudgy verdict, still possible in that State under an old English-Scottish law—"not proven."

For which, it was apparent, Fayne would take pains to let Honoria know he, himself, was responsible. The girl's gratitude under the circumstances to the man who had saved her dearly beloved brother from a prison sentence (actually at his, Fayne's, own risk, by suppressing evidence) could be imagined.

He had taken the first step in that direction when he had ordered O'Carroll from the room, of which also Honoria had informed him. The second step had been to send O'Carroll back to Baltimore, hinting craftily to Honoria that, if he remained and continued inimical, he might unearth some stray bit of "circumstantial stuff" that, added to that already found against Hornby, might prove his undoing.

The human motive in this was exceedingly and painfully plain to Alan Ardick, especially since he himself had fallen under Honoria Hornby's spell. When they resided in Baltimore during Hornby's professorial days there, Fayne, then a mere "front-office dick" without rank, newly promoted from the pavement, had seen the wisdom of learning something of the scientific side of his profession. With that end in view he had hunted up Hornby, whose reputation as a criminologist had just begun to be nation-wide.

And then it was he had seen Honoria and fell in love with her.

Ardick had noticed Fayne's play to win Honoria's approval.

The use of his superior authority to order O'Carroll about and then to send him back—all this, Alan deduced, had been carefully thought out for effect.

"Damned clever, too!" he muttered. "But he shan't have her, confound him!—not if I have to stay sober the rest of my life. I would, too, if I thought I could get her. Well, I've as much right to try as Fayne has, that's certain."

Calling Ardick in had been an unexpected move on Hornby's part—one Fayne hadn't expected. Alan winced as he realized that Fayne would not have been so willing to have him work on the case had he any belief in his, Alan's, sticking powers; or, rather, sticking-away powers — sticking away from whisky! Alan knew his own reputation as well if not better than any one else—"brilliant but unreliable." Of course Fayne had not counted on the same thing happening to Alan as had happened to himself—a determination if not to win Honoria Hornby for himself, at least to prevent any one else from winning her.

These were the thoughts that possessed Alan as he tossed and tumbled sleeplessly that first night in the professor's bed at the Hornby house. The sleeplessness was inevitable since he had fiercely determined that he would not take so much as one single drink until the case was over. If things went badly for Horace Levering Hornby, no one would be able to say (by which he meant Honoria) that it was because he, Alan Ardick, had not stayed sober.

His mind went groping out for something to fasten on. He had talked at length with Hornby in the prisoner's reception-room at the new brick county jail. For all his lack of alibis and the one or two bits of damaging circumstantial evidence against him, Alan never doubted his friend's innocence.

And because he did not doubt it his mind had fastened on the one, the only thread possible.

Hornby had seen a car loaded down with passengers dash past him at so high a rate of speed that he was unable to recall the faces of any one in it. He only retained the memory that the car had been full. Questioned closely by Alan, he seemed willing enough to admit that the passengers were all men.

How long after the car had passed him had he picked up that pendant in the road? Oh, a few minutes. Had he been under the impression that it was dropped by some one in the car? Yes, vaguely, he supposed he had; he had not thought much about it.

But it was a woman's jewel, Alan had insisted. How did that jibe with his belief that there were only men in the car? It didn't. He hadn't thought tangibly on the subject at all until Alan had questioned him, Hornby admitted; now he could see a ray of daylight for him.

For, if his general impression had been that there were only men in the car was an accurate impression, and a woman's jewel had been dropped by one of them (especially as it turned out to be a jewel stolen from a woman), wasn't it a fair hypothesis that those who rode in the car had been responsible for the Cycle of Six burglaries?

Yes, it *was* a fair hypothesis. His, Hornby's, mind had instantly leaped to that.

Good! Now, what was his reason for believing that it had been dropped from the car, apart from the fact that he had found it just after the car had passed?

Hornby had answered almost automatically: "Because, if the pendant had *not* been dropped from the car, it might have been ground to bits or else buried so deep in the sand that I would not have seen it shining in the moonlight. For I found it in one of the ruts of the road, one that bore marks of the tires of the car that had just passed."

"That's what I hoped to hear you say," Alan had been swift to add. Bidding Hornby wait, he had gone to the sheriff's office for a road map of the county. Returning with it, he had asked Hornby to mark upon it the approximate place of meeting with the car and finding of the jewel.

"If you want to help me," he had whispered, "help me to help you. Doctor, you'll say nothing about what I've asked you to any one, not even to Fayne. I want to work this thing out in my own way."

But now, alas, as he tossed and tumbled, he could think of nothing but his desire for a drink—just one—to relieve his tortured nerves.

He arose and, agitatedly, spasmodically, began pacing the floor. And dawn found him thus, an exhausted wreck, still dominated, however, by a determination to win.

Somehow his shaking hands managed to get his cheeks shaved, his person clothed. Noiselessly he quitted the house for the garage.

He pushed, shoulder against the slanting rear of the tonneau of Hornby's fast roadster, so that it might be started without the usual series of explosions. A leg over the door and he allowed the car to float down the lawn slope to the rear road.

Hornby's house stood well within its own grounds, at a distance of a few miles from the county-seat where its owner languished in the county jail. Alan knew that to go to the town in search of a doctor was a fool's errand. None of them would be in their offices at five-thirty in the morning, and he did not know where they lived.

But he remembered, when driving out to Hornby House, a certain old English house of Georgian brick set a little back from the road and amid an old-fashioned English garden, where bloomed chrysanthemums, asters, late roses, and many another of the early fall flowers. Attached to the white garden palings had been a battered black sign bearing a doctor's name in faded gilt letters.

That had been on the main road. Surely——

Even as he was praying for a sight of it he found it; and with it a pleasant surprise. For all it was barely six, an old gentleman was abroad in the garden, shears in one hand, cyanide spray in the other. "Snip-snip!" went one and "pff-pff-pfffh!" the other as the old man mourned aloud the longevity and evil nature of the rose-bug.

He glanced up as Alan's borrowed car stopped before his gate, coming to it and throwing it open at sight of the tortured face of his visitor. Laying aside his gauntlets with his shears and spray, he led the way to a little one-story addition to his old brick house, where a slightly newer black sign had this addendum: "Office."

"Doctor," burst from Alan once the door was closed, "I have been brought from Baltimore by Miss Honoria Hornby to look into this 'Phantom Fingers' series of robberies, but chiefly to look for proof that they weren't committed by her brother."

"As if any one who knew him could believe that his arrest is anything but a hideous travesty on justice," broke in the old doctor indignantly. "So you are a detective?" He looked at Alan curiously. "The first time I have ever met one. I see you are following the 'Sherlock Holmes' convention—the 'gentleman investigator.'"

This latter as Alan proffered his card.

"I am going to follow it in another way this morning," Alan said, and tried to smile. "You see—I am sorry to confess it—I was just ending an alcoholic bout when she came for me. The lieutenant who arrested Doctor Hornby (my old professor at college), when he heard the doctor was sending for me, had told her, 'He'll be all right if he keeps sober.' Hearing this, I made her a promise, gave her my word of honor not to touch a drop of anything containing alcohol until I had freed her brother. Well, I've stuck it out until now. But I stepped into hell last night. Now, don't tell me to go back home and to bed, and you will see that I get sleep and will look after me when I awaken. I know that's the right thing for you to say—the ethical thing. But every hour I lose now with the evidence, such as it is—the clues, you understand, still fresh—is another nail in Doctor Hornby's coffin and in mine. And since I cannot adjust my own condition in the usual way——"

"Meaning?"

"My word of honor keeps me from using any of the hair of the dog that bit me. Therefore I've come to you for some rather heroic measures—emergency first-aid. I was in the Ambulance Corps during the war and I learned that 30 minims of magendi solution given me now and a wait of a quarter-hour to see if it's sufficiently effective—if not, another 30 minims—will fix me up so that I can go about my work to-day. To-night, half of whatever I take

this morning. To-morrow morning, half of that; at night, half again. And by that time my shattered nerves and sub-normal heart action will have had time to adjust themselves. You have only to make an examination, doctor, to realize that, unless this is done, I cannot be of much use to any one to-day. But I will *not* touch alcohol, nor will I go to bed—not with Doctor Hornby's liberty at stake and his sister's happiness. No!"

Sighing, the older man took up his stethoscope. He sighed more heavily when he had completed his examination.

"Let your coat and waistcoat lie there, my boy, and you continue to lie there. I will fix the magendi for you."

Half an hour later Honoria Hornby was awakened by the telephone on her night table. Alan was speaking.

"I've borrowed one of your cars and I'm off to work. If Fayne phones and asks about me this morning, let him think I'm in my room sleeping. If he thinks that means 'sleeping it off'—he made some comments yesterday concerning my appearance—why, let him think so. I'd rather he would think so. No matter what he says, Miss Honor, just agree with him. Do you understand what I mean? No matter what he says —*about me,* that is—*just agree with him!*"

When he heard her answer—an indignant one—he smiled for the first time since she had retained him in her cause.

CHAPTER FOUR

ON THE TRAIL OF THE MYSTERY CAR

WHEN Alan hung up the receiver after concluding his conversation with Honoria Hornby the magendi solution had done its work. At best both anodyne and analgesic plus a heart stimulant, it happened to be just exactly the one temporary expedient that would permit Alan to go on with his work—all others requiring that he remain abed obviously, under the circumstances, impossible.

But Alan was well aware of the *exceedingly* temporary nature of this particular expedient; knew that, after the two days agreed upon by the physician as the limit of safety, he must "hole up"—spend no less than twenty-four and very probably forty-eight hours in absolute rest and quiet.

Two days, then, in which to solve the mystery of "Phantom Fingers"—a mystery the best detectives of both Baltimore and New York had found too much for them, whose previous Cycle of Six had passed into the list of classic crimes that no one ever expects will be solved.

Two days in which to clean Horace Hornby's slate so thoroughly that there would not be even an indictment for the grand jury!

Two days in which to keep Honoria safe from the slow, steady, sure, persistent methods of Mark Fayne!

It was *some* assignment, but the thought of Honoria Hornby carrying her sacrifice of self so far to insure the safety of her brother struck fire into Alan Ardick's very soul. He *would* not, *could* not fail.

He had reached that section marked on the road map as the approximate place where the motor-car had passed Dr. Horace Levering Hornby. Then he ran his borrowed car onto the sward and began pacing the road between the possible place where the pendant had been found and the probable juncture of Hornby and the mystery car.

Had this been an ordinary road Alan would not have paused to examine it. But it was hardly more than a right of way, a bridle path. Hornby had emphasized the fact that his "nocturnal strolls" were always on by-ways, not highways; on little-used paths, where one was assured of absolute solitude.

Therefore, it was not surprising that a heavy car, crowded with male passengers, should have left the mark of its tires so heavily indented that they were yet to be found. For this was during that spell of dry September weather that usually precedes the Equinox. No other car of anything like its size, or, for that matter, not

any car at all, had driven past since then, if the road itself was to be believed—an iron-tired wagon or two, yes, and a light vehicle of the surrey sort, judging by the rim grooves; also one or two riding horses had left their marks.

But no other car except Alan's. He could easily see why those who knew that countryside well should avoid it when he remembered that he had been compelled to shift into intermediate gear times too numerous to remember, and into low gear at least half a dozen times, if he was to follow certain corkscrew-shaped ascents through brake and bramble.

He felt a certain elation at this discovery. Added to the finding of the pendant, and Hornby's impression that the passengers in the car were exclusively male, was the certainty that it had come that way in order to attract as little attention as possible.

The other alternative—that the car had come that way because it was manned by strangers—would not endure scrutiny. Strangers or not, some one of the lot—the planning, organizing head, the real "Phantom Fingers"—knew that countryside better perhaps than many who had lived there all their lives.

Otherwise, how would he have been able to plan that second Cycle of Six so cunningly that those six houses, all at some distance from one another, had been entered and robbed, the robber departing therefrom unobserved in each case.

How else would he have known what roads to use to keep his car unobserved on the way in as well as out?

Alan followed the track of the heavy tires. Not only had the car departed in that direction, *but that was the way it had come!*

"Got it!" exclaimed Alan joyfully, and aloud, although there was none to hear. He ran on down the road to make sure—ran, afraid his own car-tracks might obliterate the others if he rode; although, remembering what Hornby had told him of the finding of the pendant, he had avoided driving in the ruts.

But what he had just discovered had been due to the fact that at one point the road had been too deeply rutted for safety at the turn just below. And it was here that the driver (probably warned by his movable upper searchlight) had turned out of the ruts, leaving the indentation of two wheels on the soft dirt road; the other two prints had been lost amid the grass, twigs, and pine-needles of the sward.

But the first pair of prints was enough, *showing as they did the car headed in the direction of the county-seat,* while on the return journey, with the deep ruts coming after the turn had been passed, the car had remained in the ruts.

Which was why Alan left *his* car behind as he ran along the road ahead, looking for another set of car-tracks of that same peculiar heavy designed tread as those found in the ruts, but so intermixed that no one could have told the direction in which the car had been going.

He must have gone close upon half a mile before he found what he was looking for. Here the ruts ceased altogether. Through some geological freak the various strata of the roadbed at this point were of the hard, unyielding sort, which, during the wet weather of long past, had not sunk beneath the wheels of passing vehicles, hence was without ruts.

But, due to recent *dry* weather, the surface of this petrified portion of the roadbed had become sufficiently covered with soft dirt and sand, so that it was now a veritable "intelligence map" to identify the various vehicles that had crossed it.

There were not many of them. Alan noted the same iron-cased wheels of farm wagons previously identified, also those of the lighter vehicle going both ways. No! His magnifying-glass told a different story—two light wagons, a surrey and a buggy, one going, one coming.

And here, at last, was positive verification of the fact that the mystery car had come and gone by this road. For a criss-cross of tire-tracks in places, but every now and again a distinct four-some (heavy tread tires being used on both front and back) were *prints going in both directions—both!*

No need for magnifying-glass now! Alan had but to stoop over from the sward at either side of the road to see a stretch of

almost parallel tire-tracks, one set leading toward the county-seat, the other toward—where?

"That," cried Alan jubilantly, "is what I intend to find out! This," he caroled, "is almost too easy. There must be a catch in it somewhere."

If he had been seen, laughing as he ran back to where he had left his car, he might have been mistaken for a boy in his early twenties.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW ALAN ARDICK FOUND ANOTHER WHO HAD SEEN THE CAR

NO sooner had the right of way through the backwoods terminated by its juncture with a main thoroughfare than the tracks became so inextricably mingled with hundreds of others that any hope of following them by eye was seen instantly to be an utter absurdity.

One important detail, however, could be settled with the eye—which direction the car had turned in leaving for the main highway. Alan again descended and, walking back to where the tire-tracks were plain, followed them to where two of the tires became even more deeply indented, while the other pair appeared to have left no marks at all.

This, then, was the turning-point—at the right, which meant the east. Alan returned to his borrowed car and turned her radiator in the same direction. He slowed up as he came to the first intersecting road and, leaving his car, searched each side for some evidence of departure on the part of his quarry.

The number of tire-tracks he found on each side of this, a mere minor artery of trade, was quite enough to show him the uselessness of hoping to trace them by this system.

He turned his car back to the little-traveled backwoods trail, where the tire-tracks of the "Phantom Fingers" car, as he had now begun to term it, stood out with cheering distinctness.

He found finally that what he wanted necessitated his going back a full mile. It was then he struck another patch of unrutted road, this one slightly verdurous, upon a section of which the big-corded tires of the heavy car had made some perfect imprints.

Alan never traveled upon business of this sort without taking certain paraphernalia necessary to the mechanics of his profession. Not knowing, when he left Hornby House, just what would come up, he had thought it wisest to bring his neatly packed leather case with his specially made camera, which contained all the necessary apparatus for taking, recording, or preserving any mechanical evidence of crime. "Finger- or foot-print evidence" was his way of classifying it all.

Although these tire-tracks were not exactly "finger- or foot-prints," they came to his mind under the same general heading. The method by which he meant to preserve specimens of them was the same he would have used in the case of footprints—a method that would have saved "Monsieur Lecoq" much time and trouble had it existed in his day.

First, he drew out an affair not unlike those used to distribute insect powder, with which he carefully outlined a perfect section of the tire's imprint. From a stout leather scabbard fastened to the inner top of the leather case he took an infinitely thin and remarkably keen flat-bladed knife. With this he cut carefully into the verdurous soil until he had isolated his perfect specimen on all four sides to the depth of half a foot, perhaps more. He then slipped the keen blade beneath his specimen print, slicing its six inches or so of thickness away from the earth beneath it. Lifting it out, he put it in a small box.

Alan brought out his bottle of solidifying fluid from its fitted-in leather pocket, another squirt-gun from another pocket inside the top of the case, this one not unlike a thick, hard-rubber syringe. Filling it from the bottle, he carefully shot therefrom enough of the solidifying fluid to keep unbroken the entire surface of the segment and perhaps an inch of the earth below. Not

waiting for it to dry, he opened the largest of his three leather cases, an empty one save for the clamps that held a covered wire basket static.

Adjusting clamps and basket to their new contents, he strapped the third leather box to the cushion of the roadster's seat, re-entered the car and drove down the main highway again until he came to Giffen's cross-roads. As it was by that time past eight o'clock, the little drug-store was open. As he expected, he saw the usual sign about the "development of films."

And again, as he expected to be granted the favor he requested, he had only to show the proprietor the little suede identification book he carried, one side of which showed his *bona-fides* as a Reserve Intelligence Officer, U. S. A., the other his State license to "carry on the business of a Private Inquiry Agent, Investigator, or Detective," and permitting him to be assisted by the city police, state constabulary, or local shrievery, with the understanding that such assistance should be mutual and private information concerning crimes against the State laws must not be withheld.

The favor in question was permission to use the druggist's camera space for a flash-light picture, his dark-room for the development thereof. And it was while his camera product lay in the latter, while he waited to make his prints, that he had come out to make certain inquiries.

For he had noted the sign "Free Air" along with the advertisement of the greatest of oil companies and the local legend to the effect that they were here represented by a certain "H. J. McKnight—Open All Night."

He made a brief calculation of time and distance, beginning with the time the car had passed Hornby, adding to it the probable time consumed by a heavy car at full speed between that point and this. Having jotted down some figures, he approached the "Gas and Free Air Station."

"Who was on duty here Tuesday morning around five o'clock or a little later?" he asked the boy who approached him.

"Pop," was his curt answer. "Jes' eatin' his breakfast I brought. Goin' home in half an hour. Wanta speak tuh him? Yah better do it now, 'cause he's pow'ful sleepy."

He pointed to the little office inside. Alan entered. He introduced himself, showing his *bona-fides* again, outlined hastily a *résumé* of the "Phantom Fingers" affair, then asked his all-important question:

"You were on duty here three nights ago —Tuesday night, or, rather, around five o'clock Wednesday morning?"

Gratified, as Alan had found most people were who had nothing to conceal by being made a party to a criminal investigation case, the stout, slovenly little man in the tattered gray alpaca coat eagerly admitted that he was on duty at the time specified.

"Do you remember a large car with big non-skid tires on both front and back wheels and carrying seven or eight passengers coming in here about that time—a little before five, maybe, or some time later."

The stout little sloven shook his head sadly; sadly, because, *had* he remembered seeing such a car, he was sure he would have had a few days, perhaps a week, of pleasant self-importance—his fare paid across the peninsula, hotel bill, daily witness fee —no end of good things.

"You're sure? Well, what is the next nearest all-night gas station between the county-seat of Suffolk and that, say, of Norfolk; they're the two biggest towns in these parts, I understand, and about as the crow flies."

McKnight reflected. "To git any other decent cross-country road, 'ceptin' this hyer turnpike, yuh gotta go ten ta twelve miles north or more'n that south. There's one on Old Post Road, north, then north by east, some fifteen-sixteen miles. 'Nother on Relauy road, south by west."

"Never mind if it's to the west," Alan interrupted. "There's only two, then, in a radius of some twenty miles, say?"

"On'y two open all night, yes, suh. Wait jes' a minnit; I'm jes' a-thinkin'. Mos'ly we doan' git no big cars much late 'n season like this. Flivvers mos'ly in this hyer part, 'ceptin' fer some taxis they call theirselves-es and buses others call theirselves-es, all makin' th' cross-country run from ocean to Ches'peake. Th' big cars

take th' 'Lantic coas' road straight up into Del'ware, or th' Bay road, if they'se on t'other side. So I ain' likely furgot no big car. On'y one was in that night come by here 'tween nine an' ten headed west.'

"Yes," encouraged Alan, pricking up his ears. That time would suit him well enough for the same car on its way toward the night's work.

"There was seven t' eight men in her. The driver had on goggles and hood, like these yere bird-men wear in flyin'-massheens. Fills up tank and emergency and gits him plenty oil, too. And plenty air——"

"Just a moment," Alan halted him. "Do you remember what kind of tires he had? You gave him air, you say. Were there non-skid tires on both front and back wheels?"

The stout little sloven began to lose his sleepy look. Visions of the hotel at the county-seat, no work for a week, and plenty of pocket money again possessed him.

"Yassuh, they *was!* They most pos-i-tiv'ly *was!* What kinda tires they was, though, I dunno. Had these yere leather casings with what looked like nails in um."

It was all Alan could do to repress a shout of joy.

"Just a moment. Wait here, will you? Perhaps that was the car, after all. Wait; I'll be right back."

He seemed to be skimming the ground as he rushed back to the druggist, who at that moment emerged from the dark-room, a wet and dripping proof of Alan's flashlight picture in his hand.

"I just hustled this thing through for you," he said. "You can wait a while for some better finished work, can't you?"

Alan agreed, thanking him breathlessly. The druggist clipped two colorless pieces of opaque but porous paper, one to each side of the wet proof, to protect it from the light.

"Explain later," said Alan, snatching it and hurrying back to the stout little sloven in the all-night "gas" station. In the office he drew down the blind, shutting off the intense glare of the morning light, and prepared to show McKnight the proof.

"This is a photograph I made of the impression of that car's tires—the impression they made on soft ground," he explained. "I thought at the time they were odd-looking prints. I wasn't able to classify the tire at all, and I know most of the leading cord-tire treads. But what you said about a leather casing 'with nails in it' made me remember an European device for making tires puncture-proof. But they're not nails; they're little metal shields of some sort, part of the scheme to make the leather casing hold smoothly to the tire, I think. But that doesn't matter. Here's the marks they make."

He lifted one of the sheets of cartridge paper and showed the photographic proof of the surface of his segment of verdurous turf. It had solidified during his trip in to Giffen's cross-roads, and the powder with which he had originally dusted it had picked out each outline to perfection.

"Them's the babies, sure 'nuff," said McKnight. "Oh, them there's the babies, and that's no lie."

Before Honoria Hornby had said good-night to Alan Ardick she had given him an envelope, the contents of which, she had said, would be self-explanatory. The ten-dollar note that he now handed McKnight had been a portion of the aforesaid contents. To a little sheaf of its like had been pinned a slip reading: "Incidental expenses. Please do *not* use sparingly in a case where there is more money to spare than there is time.—H. H."

"That ten dollars is for yourself. I am going across the way myself to telephone. While I am gone I want you to call up the other gas station to the northeast and find out if such a car passed there early Wednesday morning. Then call up any one else you can think of who is on night duty or likely to be up at that hour in the morning. Never mind about the cost of the calls. I'll pay for them. Call up *any one* whom you think might *possibly* have seen that car. See if anybody can *identify* it. It may be known as *some person's* car. If you can get any information it means another ten for you."

He paused at the door. "You haven't described the car to me yet, by the bye." He took out his note-book. "Painted black, of

course it would be. 'Javelin,' 1915 or '16. Eight-passenger car, you say? Oh, by the way, when last seen it had from six to eight passengers, all male—all men, you understand? Go on! Touring car, of course; top up. Man driving wore aviator's hood and goggles. Well, I suppose that's all just now. Start your phoning."

Entirely forgetful of his dignity as a detective engaged upon an important case, he went up the steps of the Cross-roads General Store, two at a time, and to the telephone. He was fortunate enough to catch Miss Honoria just as she was about to go out to the other car which would take her in to the county-seat. She told him he must hurry, as there was a hot breakfast in the car that she was carrying to her brother.

Alan was suddenly reminded, by her asking him if he had had his own breakfast, that, in the excitement of the morning, he had forgotten all about.

"But, listen!" he urged boyishly. "I've got good news for you, great news. I've got something to go on, understand? Be careful not to let any one hear you—not even Fayne! But when you're alone with your brother, just whisper this to him: 'Ardick is following the tracks of the car you saw. They run both ways—on the same road. Lost 'em once, but picked up the trail here at Giffen's cross-roads!' Don't expect me until you see or hear from me, and don't tell any one else where I am or what I'm doing. Let Fayne believe anything he likes, Miss Honoria. Tell your brother to keep up his spirits; I'll pull him out, please God!"

CHAPTER SIX

THE FINGERPRINTS OF "PHANTOM FINGERS'S" FRIENDS.

ARDICK was approaching the "Gas Station" leisurely, when the stout little sloven, McKnight, came running to the door of the office and waved to him excitedly.

"Got it!" he yelled. "Come on; got it."

Alan, his heart beating wildly, hurried into the office, following the little fat man, who immediately dropped his voice.

"Best thing we can do is to git into your bus and drive for the place where it is," he whispered excitedly.

"Where what is?"

"The car you're so gol-durned anxious to find, that's what car," returned the agitated little man. "And it ain't ten miles from here, at that. Not more'n twelve, at most. Tell you all about it once we git started. Somebuddy might hear us yere, and I ain't takin' no chances bein' done outa what's rightfully mine by some bunny-eared bystander erroun' yere, nossuh, not me."

Pausing only to retrieve his paraphernalia, those three leather cases which he had left with the druggist, Alan leaped into the driving seat, saw McKnight accommodated on the other side, and started the car.

"Straight ahead," directed his companion. "I'll tell you when to turn. Now about this car. I phoned the other gas station; nothin' doin'. Then I phoned——"

"Who was it gave you your information?" demanded Alan curtly.

"It was Reddy Connor," he answered. "Reddy's a mechanic over ta Greenpoint, where the Robert E. Lee garage is. Greenpoint's about fifteen miles from here, I guess. I wasn't phoning Greenpoint. I was talkin' to another garage man at Sands. Reddy, he happened to be in that garage when I was talking, and he gits an earful, and sneaks out and phones me from some other place.

"Seems like these people had a bad accident, jes' this side of Greenpoint. 'Bout 5:30 Wednesday mornin', the fog bein' bad in those parts, they run clean off the road into an old ditch alongside and jam their radiator against one of the foundations of the new culvert that's jes' goin' up there. Reddy, who's goin' to work in one of the shop Fords, pulls them out and tows them into Greenpoint. But they don't want their car repaired, they says—seven of 'em jes' like you told me there was, the driver doin' the talkin'—the one *I* saw.

"So that's what strikes Reddy as bein' funny, their not wantin' the car repaired.

They—that is, this driver—says they've got lots of things in that car they don't wanta have everybody lookin' at, and they're ready and willin' to pay liberal if MacConachy (that's the Greenpoint garage man) has got an empty stable or place they can lock their car up and leave her lay till they can come back an' git her. More'n that, they're willin' to put up whatever amount MacConachy thinks is right fer the loan of a car to take 'em where they gotta go. They're Gov'ment men, they tells him on th' quiet, a-lookin' to run down a bunch of boot-leggers, and they can't afford to have anybody know their plans.

"Well, the way it works out, MacConachy drives a bargain with them and lets 'em have the small garage back of his house that he uses for his own car. Their car is pushed in there, they take a couple of bags of things out of it and puts 'em in an old six-passenger Beranger, 1914, that MacConachy lets 'em have the loan of for a $500 deposit, which they pays for in hundred-buck bills. Also it's agreed they git four of them hundreds back when the car comes back in good condition, when they also agree to pay for the rent of the little garage. They said they'd come back for their car and the rest of their things on Friday night about nine o'clock.

"So Mac hands 'em over the key to the padlock, which they hands back, also the padlock, and puts a padlock of their own on in its place. And then telling Mac to keep shet about it, an' Reddy, too (who they give ten bucks to), they gits in the Beranger and drives off, which is the last Mac or Reddy's seen or heard from them, this being before six in the mornin'.

"So when Reddy hears me phonin' the garage man at Sands and gits that earful, and always thinkin' somethin' funny about that there car, he up and phones me like I tell you, but says I ain't to tip him off to Mac, but not to furgit him when it comes to any reward that's bein' offered.

"Which I tells him I will split with him cheerfully when I gits it, not knowin' anything else to say. I was right, wasn't I, capting?"

Alan answered in the affirmative.

Following McKnight's directions, they rolled into the little village of Greenpoint about half an hour later.

"We won't bother goin' to the R. E. Lee garage," decided McKnight. "This yere MacConachy is one fighting guy, a black Orangeman from Donegal. No use seekin' fer trouble. We'll go right to his house, where they ain't nobuddy but his wife. He ain't got no key to the padlock, anyhow, it bein' theirs—— Turn up thataway. It's a good long ways from his garage, and they ain't no telephone."

Alan found the MacConachy house at the foot of a little country lane, separated from sight of the nearest neighbor by a number of umbrageous weeping willows. Evidently Mrs. MacConachy had gone about her morning marketing, or was "visiting with the neighbors." At all events she was absent.

"Couldn't be better," chuckled McKnight. "Now I'll find the tool-shed an' we'll take off the hasps, an' that will settle their padlock. So they're coming back at nine o'clock Friday night for their things, are they?"

"I surely hope they will. There are enough tools to open the garage in the car," said Alan, and he proceeded to bring out chisel and screw-driver. Alan worked with one, McKnight the other, and the hasps were soon off.

The wrecked car stood within. Save that it was mud-stained and travel-worn, its wrecked condition was not so apparent from the rear. Alan drew on a pair of rubber gloves and tossed another pair to McKnight. He had taken them from one of his grips.

"Put those on," he directed, "before you touch that car. I'm hoping there will be fingerprints there that will help me in my search. But, first, we'll see what these fellows left behind. Get that car of mine out of sight in the woods back there, and when you get out close those doors behind you. Same when you come back. We don't want to attract attention."

Even before McKnight returned Alan had brought forth enough incriminating evidence to support his own theory as to the ways and means by which the Cycles of Six

had been accomplished. Wrapped up carefully in chamois within what looked like a doctor's bag, and thrust into a pocket of the car, was all that went with the "carbon pencil" apparatus: gloves, hood, and mask of rubber, insulated copper wire with screw-on plugs for electric light, the stumps of two used carbons, and several pairs of the slender black carbon candles themselves.

Beneath the seat, carefully packed into a telescope-case, was an acetylene blow-pipe, the bag that lay near it containing rubber gloves and mask, a sectional "jimmy," and other tools. Another set found in a chamois belt with pockets included several varieties of drills, some slender, some thick, along with the brace and bitt—this one of the hand variety.

Near by, also neatly stowed away, was another drilling outfit, the brace and bitt of this one having electrolier attachments similar to those of the carbon pencils.

"Humph! No wonder those crooks are coming back to get these things. Take these to my car," directed Alan, bundling the lot into McKnight's arms as he returned from hiding their machine.

And then, eyes glittering in the darkness of the windowless garage, Alan set to work on the fingerprints with which, his electric flash revealed, the side doors of the car were spotted.

It was a long and tedious job, photographing these by flashlight, for in hardly a single case were the prints of both hands of any one man in close juxtaposition to one another, so that the photographs were necessarily jumbled-looking enough to be rejected as worthless by any save the trained fingerprint expert.

But it was done at last, as much to Alan's satisfaction as was possible, everything in the garage replaced in the same positions as before and leaving the hasps screwed into place. Mrs. MacConachy had, fortunately, not returned.

"Now, McKnight," said Alan as he passed over to that worthy another $25 from the roll of bills he carried, "it is up to you to keep Reddy Connor's mouth closed, and your own besides, except that you are to carry a note I will write to the sheriff of this county to have that garage of MacConachy's watched in case they return for their car before I get back from Baltimore. To-morrow is Friday—the day those fellows are supposed to come back for their possessions, you know."

"Baltimore?" breathed the stout little man. "What are you going there for, capting?"

"To take these photographs to the Bertillon man there and have him look over his records to find out whose signatures they represent," answered Alan grimly. "After finding those tools there isn't much doubt that their owners are fairly well known to the police and have probably left their mugs in the rogues' gallery."

CHAPTER SEVEN

IT was late afternoon before Alan reached Baltimore and turned in his loot to the Bertillon man at headquarters. And it was not until then that, bent almost to the breaking-point, he sought out his own family physician, who, like the old man of the morning, advised bed for a day or so.

Nevertheless, patched up for the time being, Alan managed to return to headquarters after some sort of a dinner and to closet himself with the sergeant in charge of the Bertillon room.

"Well?" he demanded, and his eyes took on some of their old light. "I see you identified them, Billy."

"I did, my boy," was Sergeant Billy Nolan's answer. "I did so. And it's a matter that goes beyond my understanding. For the four sets of fingerprints that you handed me I have the duplicates of right here on the cards under my elbow. *And the owners of every one of four of those same fingerprints have served from two to five years of their sentences in Red Reef Penitentiary and are now completing their sentences there.*"

Alan was astonished, as he knew that a man in prison could not have been responsible for the six robberies with which Professor Hornby had been charged.

"I'll go to the jail and have a chat with Hornby about it," he soliloquized. "Theorizing will do no good. Action alone counts now. Perhaps the professor may offer some wholesome advice. Then he said aloud to Sergeant Billy Nolan:

"I want to have a talk with Hornby."

The warden led him in the jail, unlocked the professor's cell, and left them facing each other.

"Ah, Alan," eagerly cried the old man, warmly shaking hands. "Any news?"

"I am puzzled over recent developments," said Ardick, taking a seat on the couch. "I've been working on your case, found an automobile trail that seems to correspond with the car you saw, and traced it to a place where it met with an accident. Seven men and the chauffeur who had been in the machine parked it in a private garage, took some things and vanished, leaving a burglars' outfit in the car. I've just turned the tools over to headquarters. They said they were coming back to claim their property to-morrow night at nine o'clock."

"They must have been the men I saw that night!" cried the professor excitedly. "And, as the burglars' tools indicate that they were crooks, they must have been guilty of the crime with which I am charged."

"I have no doubt of it," quietly answered Alan. "I got the fingerprints which they left on the car, compared them with the records at headquarters, and I've established their identity. But here a most peculiar element of mystery enters the case. The fingerprints are those of Red Kelly, Spider Dunn, Jerry Mix, Peter Wagner, and——"

"My God!" gasped Hornby, turning pale.

"You know, then, that they are in Red Reef Penitentiary? Well, that's where the mystery comes in. How could they be serving unexpired terms in prison and at the same time prowling around this part of the country committing burglaries?"

The professor was in a cold perspiration.

"Because," he cried, suddenly gripping Alan's arm, "because I had influence enough to have them temporarily released on parole, to test a theory I wished to incorporate in my book, 'Psycho Criminalis.' In fact, I put up a bond for their safe return. In the excitement I've forgotten all about them. In fact, it never occurred to me that they were the crooks, as they had sworn to mend their evil ways and become respectable citizens again."

"Explain yourself," muttered the astonished detective.

"Oh, I wanted to test the old theory that, no matter how hardened a criminal might be, he is susceptible to benevolent assimilation and might be reformed. Securing these men, I put my theory into practice. But I now see that the lying hypocrites only *pretended* to fall in with my views so they could double-cross me, as I'll explain. On the night of the robberies they probably had a plan hatched to plunder my friends and disappear. I blundered into their way and was nabbed by Fayne. And they, by this time, are doubtless back at their old haunts, enjoying the fruits of those robberies. In the meantime I am lying in jail, accused of the crime they committed."

"Then the case resolves itself into the capture of these crooks, nailing the evidence on them, and thus securing your release," said Alan. "I see through the whole thing now, and think I have the means of capturing the whole gang. Have you any suggestions to make?"

"None whatever; I have enough confidence in your ability to feel that my fate is safe in your hands, my boy."

Alan left headquarters feeling that the professor's acquittal now depended entirely upon him. Wearied, he secured a good sleep.

By the following nightfall he was back in Greenpoint with McKnight, and found the sheriff and half a dozen deputies on guard at MacConachy's garage.

"Those crooks have not yet returned to claim their wrecked car," the sheriff explained, "but it isn't likely they'll leave it here long, with all those burglars' tools you said you found in it."

"That's exactly what I'm banking on," replied Alan. "We must capture that gang if it costs my life, as I've sworn to vindicate Professor Hornby. They said they'd

be here to-night at nine, and it's now eight o'clock."

A plan of action was agreed upon, the sheriff secreting his armed posse so they could watch the garage without being seen themselves. Alan, armed with an automatic, posted himself in a bush at the roadside, commanding a view of MacConachy's private garage. Minutes passed, the only noises disturbing the silence coming from a few belated automobiles and the monotonous chirping of insects.

The detective glanced at the phosphorescent dial of his watch and saw that it was nearly nine o'clock. An almost noiseless big machine came gliding down the road without headlights and paused near MacConachy's gasolene pump, as if to replenish her tank, but to Alan's pleased surprise six men alighted and without hesitation started through the yard toward the garage. Ardick's fingers involuntarily gripped the butt of his gun.

The moment they vanished around the house he crept over to their hired machine and found the engine running. Turning the switch, he stopped the engine, then pulled out the starting key, which was stuck in the slot, and dropped it in his pocket.

"Now, they can't get away," he reflected as he hurried back to his covert. From here he could see that the men had the door of the garage open, and as none were in sight it was safe to infer that they had gone inside.

Knowing where the sheriff was hidden, Alan crept over to him and whispered:

"Did you see what's happening?"

"Every move they made, and my men saw them, too."

"Very well. Now line them up near the door."

In a few moments they were set for the attack, and it came the moment the gang came out, cursing in low tones over the disappearance of their burglar tools.

A roar from the sheriff halted them, but they were desperate men and began to fire the moment they realized that they were besieged by officers. Shots flew from both sides, there was some cursing, and the man Alan singled out hurled a stone that struck him. As Ardick fell, half stunned, the man rushed to the car and climbed in, but swore when he found the engine stalled and the starting key missing.

It happened that he had a duplicate key in his pocket, but while he was fishing it out Alan recovered and, following him, sprang on the running board just as the car sped away. The next moment he grappled the man, who had to relinquish the wheel, and as they struggled furiously the car ran wild. It brought up against a tree with a crash, and the crook was hurled out. His head struck a rock, and as he lapsed into insensibility the detective pounced on him and snapped a pair of handcuffs on his wrists. He was the man in the aviator's costume and proved to be the leader of the gang.

Beyond a broken lamp and fender the car was in good running order, and Alan lifted his prisoner in and drove back to MacConachy's. There he found the sheriff and his deputies bruised, cut, their clothes torn, and several wounded.

But they had the other crooks!

"Yes," said Hornby next morning, as he eyed the captives at headquarters, "they are the men I took from the Red Reef Pen, and I'm glad one of them turned State's evidence, and confessed where the loot was hidden, as that clinches the evidence against them and vindicates me."

"And we owe my brother's release to you," said Honoria, her soft glance turned in gratitude upon Ardick. "How can we ever show our appreciation?"

Alan's face reddened, but he managed to screw up enough courage to say:

"I'd like to call on you this evening, to talk about the case, for Professor Hornby is a dear friend, you know, and I was very glad to be of service to him. Besides, I've lost all my craving for liquor since I found a new and powerful incentive in life."

"And what might that incentive be?" she asked curiously.

"You!"

Her cheeks flushed prettily, and after a moment's hesitation she said smilingly:

"I shall expect you to-night at eight."

The Ming Gow Jury

By NEIL McCONLOGUE

MOST next-door neighbors have ever been fast friends or bitter enemies. This dogmatic assertion seemingly applies to nearly all next-door neighbors, be they residents of the ultra-fashionable neighborhood, the gulch through which swings the rumbling elevated trains, or denizens of slithering Chinatown. Has it occurred to you that even the progress of time and, we might add, good breeding has not removed humanity's desire to die for each other?

As an example, and to substantiate this tenet, take The Ming Gow Jury.

Ming Gow, the murdered man, and Bow Sing, the accused, were often pointed out as the higher type of Chinamen—Mandarins. Both, it seems, were trusted and respected by Occidental and Oriental with whom the men did business or met socially. Yet the law drew the sober, portly Bow Sing into its tentacles, indicted him and apparently had a case against him.

Gotham's Chinatown knew Ming Gow for thirty-odd years. Called him "financially solid" and established. Even to his dress he never varied. Others, usually the younger and American-born Mongolian, adopted certain Americanisms of manner and dress, but not Ming Gow. Unless it was in the jaunty manner in which he wore his round, sheen-like cap, which always fought its way down toward one of the old man's slightly aslant eyes, where it rode gaily, Ming had changed little since his arrival in the States.

His skin was a soft yellow; his eyes, usually wide open, protruded, popped more each day, it seemed, as though by the slow embrace of exopthalmic goitre clinging to the Chinaman's trachea. Not usually part of an Oriental's make-up, Ming's lips, full and heavy, wore a constant smile.

Loose, silky garments, with ankle-gartered trousers, snapped in the breeze as Ming covered the sinuous paths and the smelly, swerving alleys of the Chinese quarter.

According to the coroner, the murder occurred early on the morning of January first, on a day when the whole city mixed thoughts and solutions of this terrible crime with their freshly fashioned resolutions.

The day dedicated to a renewal of purposes to live aright; to a refurbushing of the principles of life that had shown themselves to be just; on a day set apart to a casting aside of the habits which have proven themselves to be one of a lower tone —Ming Gow's slayer struck!

Looking closely, unwaveringly taking in every detail of the Chinaman's blouse, Lew Madden, chief of detectives, wagged his head, saying:

"One blow did the trick. And it was no doubt the sum total of a 'hatchetman's' twilight duty." But after a hasty investigation, legion of questions asked and answered in "pidgin-English," Madden, like the other officers, changed his mind. And with reason.

Matters proved that for years Ming Gow was a member of the Hip Sing tong, but all who had fraternal or outside interest in the Hip Sings were positive that no hatchetman of the On Leong tong, age-old enemy of the rich Hip Sings, watched a chance to "give special attention to Ming Gow." Further, the On Leong tong men never crushed a victim's head except in the victim's very household. And records proved that then the deed was done "just inside the door leading

to the bowels of a Chinaman's home." Besides, it was common knowledge that any Hip Sing, who had cause to be wary and watchful of the On Leon killers, able to get into or out of their hallways safely could relax and breathe more easily.

Ming Gow's clammy, seeping body, stuck to the floor in its own coagulated blood, was found—just inside the doorway of Bow Sing's hallway.

Conjecture had it that Ming met his death shortly after leaving the Bijou Theatre, a small motion picture house which the old Chinaman had been in the habit of attending. The theatre was just around the corner from the dead man's place of business—a complex little shop, said to be a "gold mine," as the sightseers thought a visit to Chinatown incomplete without brousing about Ming's store.

Ming had been to the movies, because witnesses testified to having seen him there. One keen observer told in detail how Ming always sought a front seat, and, having attained an empty one, he'd drop down the bottom, unwind his long queue, dust off the seat, wipe his full jowls with his queue, jovially beam at a jaundiced countryman, and then sit down.

Police theory had it that the man was waylaid upon his return from the cinema. They said that it would be little trouble for the stout Bow Sing to lure Ming into the narrow, creaking passageway leading to the Bow Sing quarters, and in fair safety strike the blow.

Against this was the fact that Ming Gow and Bow Sing, night after night, engaged in social mah-jongg as they laughed or studied each move, underneath huge bunches of dried fish and shriveled vegetables which dangled from the time-browned walls of Ming Gow's store.

Against this theory, of course, was butted the Favonian fact, from the prosecution's viewpoint, that for years Bow Sing was a power among the On Leong tong, and in his youth had been an intimate of the notorious Mock Duck. However, such evidence was shaded by the knowledge that the On Leong tong never killed beyond the domain of their victim.

The arrest of Bow Sing came, somewhat belated, quite true, but eventual. In due time the case was brought to trial. Ashton Duane, assistant prosecuting attorney, acting for the State, put the facts, the evidence in the case against Bow Sing, before the jury in a masterly, theoretical manner. Opposing him, representing the defence with convincing, dart-like parry of legal quotation and supplication, was Howard Fallows.

For several days Bow Sing sat stoic-like beside his lawyer. The latter, upon occasion and with a gusto, assured the court and jury that his client was innocent. He told of how it was all a terrible mistake. That a verdict of acquittal might be forthcoming, Fallows delved away back into the family friendships between the defendant and dead man. He high-lighted this understanding.

"With my whole heart I assure the court and gentlemen of the jury," concluded Fallows, "anything but acquittal for Mr. Sing would be a gross miscarriage of justice. Between the now dead man and the defendant existed a complete faith, a complete understanding in one another. This, gentlemen, was not born of a few years. It was a sublime something that dated back generations; back to the days when Canton, the home city of both men, was called Kwang-Chow Foo. Why, when they were boys together they played, fished and fought along the banks and in the great Pearl River. Much of their conversation in these later years has touched upon the sacred memories of the past and present attachment.

"They spoke of the drab days and the later-day bright ones. And very often their talk swept again to the province of their birth, Kwang-tung—its reddish roofs, pagodas that shot up into the very clouds, beautiful temples that studded the grounds inside the four great walls of the city. Such men don't kill each other!" declared the astute Fallows.

Following, he introduced the fact that Bow Sing's father, a most honorable man, one of the limited group permitted to deal with the foreigners, men known as The Kong, arranged matters so that Ming Gow's father might leave his leaky junk—no more

to ply the heavily burdened vessel up and down the great Yangtse River. Instead, the father of Ming Gow became a silk merchant, respectable, and finally saved sufficient funds to bring himself and family to America, where later Ming Gow and Bow Sing took up their boyhood friendship.

The State offered, as "exhibit A," the hatchet found near the body of the dead man; it was still smeared with caked blood and eerie. A fingerprint expert testified that he found semblance of human prints upon the handle, but that for some reason the oily curvatures which guide his profession in the detection of crime had been obliterated. However, the hatchet had apparently not been handled with a gloved hand, and what print remained seemed to "reasonably" point the finger of suspicion at May Wong, white wife of Ming Gow's former storekeeper, the Chinaman who had left the employ of the dead man to open a store of his own.

Still, May Wong gave straightforward testimony. She had been ill for two days previous to the slaying and, about to recuperate, the news that Ming Gow had been murdered almost prostrated her. Her story was substantiated by Doctor Luttonne!

"Again, gentlemen," concluded Assistant Prosecuting Attorney Duane, "I repeat, this case is not beyond our ability to make a perfect union of the facts and arrive ultimately at a verdict of guilty! It is an open-and-shut case of murder—downright, premeditated, cold-blooded murder! It is the result of a contest, a sly, slinking contest of languid hate, a hate perhaps brewing for—possibly for years! It was a passive, phlegmatic hate; a hatred only assuaged and eradicated, from the viewpoint of the murdered, by tong hatchetry!"

So dramatic was Duane's approach to his closing sentence that the cool, clear tones of Judge Stafford's voice sounded not unlike the gentle, timed stroke of an old-fashioned hall clock following a resonant, Lydian medley broadcasted from a cathedral chime-tower.

"In turn, gentlemen of the jury," said the jurist, "you have been told that the defendant has sheltered a great hatred for the murdered man. That the death of Ming Gow was the result of a combined effort on the part of a Chinese society, a secret organization called tongs, and a personal grievance on the part of the defendant. Against this accusation the attorney for the defense insists, with phrase—we trust we might add with fact and reasoning—that the defendant is the victim of circumstances.

"It is not my intention to further burden you with a résumé, a monologue, of the case. It has been lengthy, as you no doubt realize, but let me urge you gentlemen to weigh carefully, minutely, all of the testimony introduced.

"You will now retire and render a verdict according to the weight of the evidence, as you see it individually."

It was just three o'clock when the jury first entered the jury-room. At six o'clock they were served dinner, trayed to them from a near-by restaurant. About three hours later, say nine that evening, Judge Stafford was called from his club to learn that juryman number ten desired a part of certain testimony be reread and explained. After which the twelve men filed back into their chamber for further deliberation and a possible verdict.

At seven the following morning a court attaché detailed all night outside of the jury-room door knocked upon the door with the intention of getting a breakfast order, but there came no reply. Insistent rapping brought no response; everything inside the chamber was quiet, and upon opening the door some minutes later the twelve jurors were found dead!

During the next few hours, because of the multifarious activities taking place, Bow Sing was forgotten. The jury-room was photographed and repictured from all angles. Walls, window-sills, in fact every cranny, was carefully scrutinized for telltale print or other clue that might solve the most horrible and intriguing mystery of the age.

The bodies were removed and every cigarette and cigar stump was kept as though the latter were priceless jewels. Even the ashes in the three trays were preserved. Steam heat disposed of the coal-gas theory

which some one offered spontaneously, and opposite that contention was the fact that the northeast window was lowered slightly from the top, and the weather bureau declared that the wind from the north would have taken care of any sort of gas, either coal or sewer, the latter which might have come from the sink.

The weather-bureau employee, however, had erred—only a slight error, one not upon which hung the solution, but a miss nevertheless! For the night wind, could it speak, might have said: "That night I swept from the south; I was a south wind, not from or of the north!"

Lew Madden spent long hours questioning, observing, giving orders and listening to suggestion. He personally ran down the most plausible leads, scents that eventually lured to the lair of defeat and brought forth only disparaging streamers across the top of the numerous dailies.

Only a few hours had ticked their way into eternity before Madden's men rounded up every hanger-on and slinking stool-pigeon about the Chinese quarter. One after another they whined either absolute denial or took a chance on giving imaginary information, which later proved fruitless.

The church of the Transfiguration, jutting into the skyways from Mott street, looked down upon a Mongolian district that was well studded with plain-clothesmen. Many of them were men drafted from Harlem or the Bronx station houses, that they might work to greater advantage, being incognito.

One superiour court judge was ushered into service, and as his bit suspended the remaining ten-months sentence given to one "Chinese" Charlie Hirsch, who had been raised in the shade of Pell, Doyer and Mott streets and had won his nickname through his ability to speak half a dozen of the sing-song dialects that came from the Far East. However, in turn, Hirsch's snooping about the narrow alleys and eavesdropping near the silver-floored hallways shed no light upon the business at hand. He never helped solve the reason why twelve true men, discharging their solemn duty, suffered so horrible a stroke.

"The Chinks all know me," Hirsch later assured Madden, "and they either gab in low tones or not at all."

And he was right! For the sallow-complexioned gentry of the Chop Suey belt seemed to slouch a trifle more and depend a great deal more upon the outer corners of their eyes; and, unnoticed, in their overlong, secretive sleeves there reposed well-honed, long-bladed weapons, a knife strapped to the forearm and ready for the lightning-like thrust.

Keen students of alchemy tested and retested different organisms of the victims and wagged their heads, nonplussed after hours or study, experimenting and thought. They did learn that two of the jurors had heart disorders. Leakage, they called it. However, it was admitted that these afflictions were not the cause of the death of the two men and didn't account for the deaths of the other ten. Another of the jury was found to have been the victim of cancer. On his feet had he been slowly dying. Inside of him gnawed a monster that lived at the pyloric side of the dead man's stomach. Friends said it had given him much trouble, but that he had thought and for years called it cramps and indigestion.

The city seethed with municipal as well as private detectives. All were bent with kindred hopes. Near-by commonwealths dispatched picked men to try to fathom the unexplained. But in truth it may be added that these neighboring sleuths were an impediment. Each of their visits to the jury-room, the gloomy Valhalla wherein the mystery was born, only served to add more conversation and confusing tracks.

The press, with great gusto, and disregarding the fact that its own "exclusive-story" men had also failed, utilized their front pages to bombard the police department with double-barbed invectives. And the custodians of the peace subsequently read these pointed recants of their failure, and in their own choice expletives railed, and each hour every day threw another blanket of remoteness over the unsolved mystery of the city's martyrs.

Following many momentary combings of the jury-room wherein the massacre oc-

curred the police, as usual, turned to the far places—far places inasmuch as motive and so forth are concerned. But, of course, when plain horse sense was intoduced mystery lost its right to existence.

The discovery, you might say, was pure accident, but that is not true. It went back beyond luck, into the realm of understanding.

Exhausted by his sleepless nights and days of great activity, Lew Madden tumbled into bed for a much needed sleep, and he tumbled right out again when Kenneth Barrows called at the Madden residence. Barrows is a chap who Madden rescued from a fire in the Hotel Rome and later permitted him to go back home with his father, a blind and aged man living in the upstate country. Young Barrows, previous to the rescue, had been listed at police headquarters as "The Quill," following his efforts as a forger. Fortunately, though, the former crook responded to every confidence Madden had shown; he kept straight and later settled up-State, where he married a lovely girl, who in the course of time presented him with an heir. A boy! And they named him Lewis Madden Barrows, after the detective.

Madden was genuinely glad to see "The Quill" again and to meet the pretty wife he had heard so much about. And the trio of visitors had hardly passed the first flush of conversation than the smallest member of the company, Lewis Madden Barrows, won his namesake without a struggle. He completely captured the big detective with a strangle-hold, which he assumed about the strong finger of Madden.

"And," concluded Madden, "I'm almost daffy over the whole thing! There's something uncanny about it. At times I think something super-human had contrived it. Again I feel it was a rare coincidence when twelve men—whose time had come—met and answered the call in unison, and that there is nothing so unusual about it if we only knew, only could see the truth."

"Well, chief," rejoined "The Quill," it is out of my line. But I have this to say: when you do solve it, and you will, the thing will be so simple as to cause you to want to kick yourself.

"I recall a story that I heard in Canada. For a long time it had folks guessing; then, like all such cases, it was so simple. Seems as though a 'shave-tail,' member of the Canadian contingent, was found dead in a dug-out, and there was no indication as to how or what was the cause of his death. He had been writing a letter when he was snuffed out. And the unfinished letter was addressed to the man's wife and written in very endearing terms. The letter was absolute proof that it was not a case of suicide. There was nothing but a candle and a bottle of ink on the table top, and not a drop of blood had been drawn.

"Nothing else practically was found.

"Later three other deaths, under like circumstances, caused much concern even in France and under shell-fire; everybody imagined that this inexplicable death hovered over them.

"One day, rather one night, a patrol brought back five Huns as prisoners—the result of their evening's performance. The Huns were captured near a sector that the Allies sought information about. But many hours of questioning gained nothing; then some one suggested that the 'Sleepless Degree' be tried on the prisoners.

"Men were chosen for six-hour watches, and it was their duty to keep the Germans wide awake. Nightfall came, and Cameron, the sentry on duty at that time, lit one of the octagonal-shaped candles brought back among other things from German trenches or dug-outs. And as he was about to light one of the candles the German prisoners screamed: *'Das tote kerzenlicht,'* which, in pure United States, means 'The Death Candle.'

"Subsequently the candles were collected——"

"Wait!" interrupted Madden, his mind having gone on ahead of the story in leaps and bounds. "What a damn fool—oh, pardon me, Mrs. Barrows. God! What an ass I am! You folks make yourselves at home; play the phonograph or the piano—anything you please. And I won't be back till early this evening. Maybe I might telephone in

the mean——" And the detective hurried out past the heavy front door.

A taxicab swept him to the courthouse, and great strides carried him to the jury-room. Inside he found it, just as he pictured it on the way downtown—the candle. There it stood solemn and alone upon the polished mahogany table, and scattered near by its base were strewn cigarette and cigar ends.

From Judge Stafford's chamber Madden telephoned to old Bill Harris, janitor at the courthouse for many years. Like shots from a pistol the chief's questions were fired at the befuddled old fellow. The final message advised Harris to come at once to the jury-room. Upon arrival the old attaché was asked:

"What's that candle for, Bill?'

"That," slowly replied Harris, "that? Why, that's to keep them, the jury members, from throwing their match-sticks on the floor. Invariably they'll toss the butts and stubs of their cigarettes on the ash-tray, but seldom they think of throwing their matches anywhere else but on the floor. I'm getting too old to be stooping over for their kindlin'."

"Where did you get the candle, Bill?" gently asked Madden.

"My Nettie brought some over from France after her nursin' job durin' the war. I was goin' out to buy some; no allowance made here for candles, you know. As it was rainin', my Nettie says: 'Pop, why don't you use up those candles laid away with my French stuff?' So I went to the closet and got this one."

"How many more are there?"

"Mebbe five or four or mebbe six; I don't just know."

"Go, Bill, as fast as you can, and bring me the rest of those candles!" Harris left hurriedly, and just as speedily Thorne, the city's chemist, responded to Madden's request to come to the courthouse at once.

"Funny how I overlooked that," assured Thorne sheepishly, after hearing Madden's story, reiterated as told by "The Quill." I recognize the peculiar shape, the octagonal, the form in which the Germans made these death-dealers—sort of protection for themselves. But the war is so far behind us that I'd forgotten this trick."

"You see," continued the chemist, "these candles are loaded part way down with poison gas, offhand I don't recall exactly what they called it. They can be and often were used in the open, mostly in field hospital work, and as there was plenty of air the gas had no effect. But where a place is shut tight, practically like this room was, the slow, creeping and then sudden death has a clear field. In this jury-room, no doubt smoke-filled, it spelled certain death!"

"You never know your luck, eh, Thorne?" meditatively remarked Madden. "Picture what happened, I can't, but it seems a cruel fate that snuffed those men out. Who'd ever think that a post-war throwback would spread havoc like this? Why, only yesterday, or was it the day before?" further mused Madden, "I almost asked Harris to get me a candle or two to use in the garage. Bill, good old soul that he is, would undoubtedly have hustled home and presented me with two or more of his daughter's candles—two or more, when one would have done the work.

"By the way, Thorne, since it has been discovered that those twelve pieces of paper, which lay before the dead jurors, were inscribed with the words, 'Not guilty,' and as the other votes were thrown upon the floor, do you think that acquits the old Chinaman?"

"I can't say, Lew; chemistry is my line. However, as I overlooked this candle's importance, you'd never think so."

It was nearly a year after Bow Sing's odd acquittal that he told Madden he had learned a member of the Hip Sing tong had hidden in his, Bow Sing's, hallway, waiting to chop his head off. And in all probability, when old Ming Gow entered the hallway to visit his dear friend, Bow Sing, he was promptly murdered.

Run To Earth

By SCHUYLER HAMILTON

AT the corner of the alley the crook turned upon his pursuers with a twisted grimace.

Leaning against an angle of the wall, he scowled outward along the way that he had come, the heavy automatic leveled in one huge, hairy hand, lips drawn backward from his broken teeth in a soundless snarl.

From his high-arched, broken nose the perspiration dripped downward to his unshaven chin, that was like a wedge, sharp-pointed; that was how he had gotten his name of the Wolf. And like a wolf, cornered by the hounds, he crouched now, hidden by that angle of wall, while just ahead in the thick darkness there sounded the slow, stealthy onset of his enemies.

The Wolf knew well enough what it would mean when the minions of the law would find him—a short shrift and then the tearing impact of a dozen bullets; they would shoot first and ask questions afterward, if there were any questions to be asked.

For they would never hold him prisoner; he would never see the inside of a court or of a jail; he knew that well enough even as he crouched, motionless, in the thick darkness of the alley's mouth, waiting for the sudden rush, the crashing of the guns and then oblivion—the death that would be the death of a brute, merciless and swift.

The Wolf had earned it twice over. The brutal killing of Detective-Sergeant Rafferty—Rafferty, of whom it had been said that he had had no enemies even among crooks. The Wolf had shot him down from the shelter of a dim doorway, giving him not a chance for his life, because, as it had happened, the detective had come between him and the object of his vengeance—a poor peddler who had been, somehow, the recipient of the gunman's festering hate.

As one man the department had sworn a vendetta. Hansen, Rafferty's side partner, had taken an oath to "get" him if it took a leg. That he was among the men waiting at the alley's mouth Di Lupo was convinced. It had been tacitly understood that Black Gian di Lupo, the Wolf, would never be brought to trial, and he knew of it.

Raging, yet afraid, he had sought shelter in Dutchman Charlie's hang-out, only to have the door closed in his face. At Looie's, an abode of stick-up men who feared neither God nor the devil, he had been told, casually enough, that his room was preferable to his company. He had found himself, all at once, a pariah even among strong-arms, heels, dips, the flotsam and jetsam of an underworld in which hitherto he had moved as a dark, ironic figure to be flattered and cajoled. They would not squeal, but neither would they aid him by so much as the lifting of a finger.

Fuming, and for the first time a prey to a certain crawling apprehension, he had essayed, by various stealthy means, an exit from the city, but to no avail.

At every turning he had slunk back, baffled. In the freight yards, for instance, he had run into Hansen, escaping merely by the proverbial eyelash; later a double cordon of plain-clothesmen had made a net through which not even a wolf might get clear. At the docks it was the same; the terminals were filled with dark-faced men whose mercy would be the mercy of quick finger upon trigger. And so, turning and doubling like a hunted beast, he had remained hidden by day. By night he ventured forth only in the deepest and dark-

est of foul alleys, returning to his abode in the dank loft of an abandoned stable, ingress to which was had merely by a creaking ladder leading to a mouldering trap-door on the second floor.

But to-night the trail had narrowed abruptly to a point of peril. Returning from a brief sortie to the low speak-easy on the corner, the Wolf, outlined for a split second against the blazing of a wayside arc, had ducked abruptly as the rattle of an automatic was followed by the high whining of the slug. And it had been Detective Hansen who had fired the shot.

He had been seen.

But there was nowhere else that he might go. Diving into the black maw of the alley, he brought up short against the stable wall, his heart pounding beneath his ribs at the sound of that swift, stealthy onrush along the cobbles.

Now they were out there—how many of them he could not tell—waiting, because they could afford to wait. Rafferty would be revenged; the Wolf would pay—unless——

Abruptly he leaped sidewise with a hissing intake of the breath as fingers of steel hooked into his shoulder and a voice came out of the dimness:

"This way, pal! We'll cross 'em yet!"

For an infinitesimal second the Wolf's black heart had leaped to the quick, crawling fear that they had come at him from behind. Now, however, with that hissing voice in his ear, he turned. It was dark in the alley, so that the owner of the voice was just a voice, and nothing more, but the Wolf had known he was a friend and, knowing, was conscious of a sort of savage thankfulness.

For the owner of that voice could save him if any one could; Snifter Joe Todeschi, a Rat of the underworld jungle, whose white, peaked face seldom if ever saw the light of day—he could do it, Black Gian di Lupo was convinced.

But it was not for love of the swart killer that Todeschi had uprisen out of the dark. Ghoul, unclean dweller-by-night in what subterranean purlieu no man could say, Di Lupo had, on occasion, thrust him from his path with heavy hand and word—once, as it had chanced, balking the white-faced "hophead" when he would have "rolled" a luckless sailorman for his watch.

But Todeschi was the one man in all that city who could save him, and not through friendship, but through fear. For perhaps, as the jungle rat reasoned, the Wolf, returned to power among the gang, would remember, and with the remembrance would come reward.

Now, at his quick, cautious admonition, the Wolf, a hand upon Todeschi's lean shoulder, followed even as there came a sudden rush of footsteps at his back. The bright beam of a flashlight stabbed through the blackness with a cry of

"There he goes! Now let him have it!"

In the brief flash of time that the light had cut through the blackness just ahead Di Lupo could see that they were running toward the wall. That wall was solid, substantial; the crook had evidence of this as the policemen's bullets, driving past his shoulder, pattered against the masonry to right and left.

And then abruptly they were through a hole; behind them, on a sudden, silence, like the silence of a tomb. Todeschi chuckled in the darkness, a sound, somehow, to freeze the blood:

"What's-a-matter for that, hey? The wall—she opens out. See, Mist' di Lupo? But she won't open again *from this side!*"

Di Lupo understood, and with the knowledge there came a vague disquiet. The wall—it was but a part of Todeschi's amazing knowledge of street and alley, a blind turning and cul-de-sac. It was apparent that in some way they had come through the wall, but it would be possible only from one side, and that side was from without, as the Rat had said. As they went onward the Wolf became aware that their course had taken a downward trend; presently, thin against the silence, he heard the slap and gurgle of water against piles.

"Th' river?" he asked, but Todeschi's answer was a chuckle.

"Th' *sewer,* pal!" he made answer. "Now—just two-three minutes and you'll *see!*"

It was curious, but as they went forward and down, their positions seemed to be reversed; it was not merely Todeschi who led, but also he who ordered, commanded, and it was not by reason altogether of his familiarity with this underground warren. It was a something deeper than that—a something at which the Wolf's skin prickled in answer as, from right to left, there came a sudden rustle, a quick pad-pad of feet. Something brushed past his ankle like the flicker of a wind-blown leaf as Todeschi, grunting, kicked out with his foot.

"Th' rats," he said in a queer, singing guttural. "They—know *me*, pal!"

Di Lupo could not see his face, but he was conscious of a sudden lightness in the words, as if the man were mocking him there in that underground sewer.

"Lissen here, you!" he grated, his great paw reaching for the slim shoulder in the darkness. "Watch your step! Get me? No monkey business now, you hear?"

But Todeschi's answer was a laugh. Evading the thick, groping fingers, he seemed abruptly to fade into the blackness, so that the gunman, cursing, swung up his heavy "gat." But of what use to shoot? Almost upon the instant he called out, and his tone was curiously imploring:

"Hey, Todd!" he called. "Todeschi! Lay off, I tell you! I can't *see!*"

Presently, after an interval, measureless in its intensity, he heard the footsteps of his guide returning, deliberate and slow.

"All right," came the voice. "Th' docks are on th' left—five minutes, now, an' you'll see. But—easy does it, Mist' Wolf!"

Again that "You'll see" in an ominous significance. Todeschi had also spoken of a motorboat just under the long dock at Pier 32. But that reiterated "You'll see"; case-hardened as was the killer, the words penetrated with a ring of threat. But, after all, what was there to fear? The Rat was just a rat, and nothing more. Besides, what had he, Gian di Lupo, Lord of Life and Death in the backwaters of the greater city, to fear from such as Snifter Joe Todeschi? Nothing.

But his brain, groping, strove with an effort at remembrance. In the short intervals that he had ventured into the streets his sorties had been of the briefest—a quick dash outward and back. He had not seen a newspaper for over a week. Once, waiting in the back room of a low, water-front groggery, he had seen his name in a double-column spread upon a fragment of torn newspaper, but that had been all. And it might have meant anything or nothing.

It was when, turning this over in his mind, he, following his guide deeper and deeper into the invisible labyrinth before them, was aware abruptly of a smell, an odor, that was overpowering in its suggestion of decay and death.

It rose as they went onward, so that Di Lupo, wrinkling his nose in the darkness like an animal, cursed under his breath. Todeschi chuckled, speaking in his native Italian:

"La Citta Morte, Excellenza!" he said.

"The City of the Dead!"

It was true. For all about them, where the sewers gaped to the foul air of this lesser hell, the legion of the dead lay naked to the low-hung curtain of the darkness. An ancient graveyard, undermined by tunneling, had settled; here and there as they went forward the floor of this grim, silent charnel was strewn thick with human bones.

The crook shivered.

"Some one's walking over m' grave!" he muttered, with the quick superstition of the Latin. And thereafter, following his guide, he kept silence, until, rounding a turn in the long corridor, they heard again the slap and gurgle of water against piles.

It was the river now; Di Lupo was certain of it. The sound came like a sound in dreams, or as if muffled by many thicknesses of walls, with, faint and far, a long, echoing roar like the sound of a great fall.

It seemed to Di Lupo that they had come many miles; in reality they had traversed scarcely the distance between the alley and the river, and that a matter of a dozen blocks. Perhaps, if he had but known it, there had been method in it—the method of a man who was more rat than human; the method of a man moving with a purpose. For as they halted, with a faint, graying glimmer just ahead, the meaning of that

rumbling roar became apparent: the subway, turning, here plunged beneath the river to the east.

Di Lupo took heart of grace. That motor-boat must be very near now, he thought, and then Todeschi turned.

"Th' light," he said; "you see—th' river, Signor di Lupo! Look!"

The crook turned, and a bony hand, thrusting against his back, whirled him outward and down. He fell heavily upon one shoulder point as the dancing mockery of the flashlight took him between the eyes. The Rat now spoke; his voice purred, dripping venom:

"Basta! Accursed diavolo! Toad that thou art! Hireling of the left hand! Didst thou think that I had forgotten?"

He spoke in sonorous Sicilian, the light gleaming upon his dark face with its pointed chin, like the face of a devil. This, then, was the news item that Black Gian di Lupo had forgotten; the thing that he had seen but dimly blazoned in a double-column spread across that torn sheet of newspaper—ten thousand dollars' reward! And Snifter Joe Todeschi would be earning it!

As the sleek voice went on realization came with the quick, hissing utterance:

"The sailor—do you remember, Di Lupo? You balked me when I tried to rob him, spawn of Syracuse! And so I swore vendetta, even I, Giuseppe Todeschi, and now——"

His voice died as the Wolf, clawing upward at the walls of his prison house, fell backward with a muffled cry. This attack had not been the matter of a reward, indeed! And now, do what he would, he was unable by so much as an inch to reach that grinning face outlined in a darkling glimmer behind the aureole of the flashlight. It grimaced downward as again he heard the voice, for the Snifter had left the sewer and was peering down a manhole at him.

"The wall, Di Lupo—the wall! Feel it, my friend, down there, at your feet!"

The gunman, stooping, ran his thick fingers at the wall's base, to find them wet. As he stooped the thin film of water at his feet was rising, rising. He straightened with a startled curse, his hand going to the automatic in his pocket. Then he jerked up the gun and fired, but the mocking face had vanished from the round hole above. Then he leaned weakly against the wall as Todeschi's voice came again:

"Save—your bullets—for yourself, my friend! It is—an easy death. Now I must be going. *A rivederci* until we meet—in hell!"

The flashlight danced, glimmered, receded, vanished. He was alone.

Di Lupo began to examine his surroundings, and found himself in a pit which had no doubt been built when the subway was constructed, but it had been abandoned in its present unfinished state for a reason that he was soon to learn. His prison, for such it was to him, was circular in shape, about twelve feet deep and between four and five feet across, and usually covered by a heavy iron disk. The walls were of a smooth, hard cement, without a foothold or anything that hands could grasp. Di Lupo took this in at a glance while Todeschi's flashlight had played upon him.

With the rising flood about his knees, Black Gian di Lupo, going at last to the final rendezvous with his master, the devil, laughed as a lost soul must laugh. His madness was coming with the rising of that tide. An hour passed, and with the water at his chin he became aware of lights, voices. They streamed toward him with the clumping pound of many feet.

He heard a voice like a sound heard in dreams:

"Ai, signori, he is there! Behold! He does not know you; he is—mad!"

The voice rose, died, gathered strength, as the officers came forward.

"You see, signori, he *thought* he was to die there, like a rat in a trap, but it was the Rat who trapped him! Because, signori, the water—it is even now going down—*it is never at the highest more than five feet!* But he thought it would go higher and drown him. The anxiety turned his brain. *Carrissima,* how he must have suffered! And the next moment the police seized Di Lupo—now a pitiful, raving maniac.

Ten Notorious Criminals

By CARL H. GETZ.

FOR weeks the newspapers and magazines of the United States have been filled with lists of the ten greatest men, the ten greatest women, the ten best books, the ten greatest athletes and what not. It occurred to me that it would be interesting to assemble a list of the ten most notorious criminals. And so I asked men in different walks to name whom they thought was the world's most notorious criminal. The first man I asked is a veteran United States Secret Service operative.

"Why, that's an easy question," he said. "Of course you have heard of Pete McCartnery, the king of the counterfeiters."

And having written several stories about Pete, I had to admit that I had.

"But do tell me what you know about him," I insisted.

"Well," said the gray-haired veteran, "Pete was a great old character. If it were possible for you to read the reports of the operatives who trailed Pete from one end of the country to another you would find this:

" 'As the express train whirled along at a speed of thirty-five miles an hour the prisoner, McCartnery, sprang from the cars, though ironed at both wrists and ankles, dashed upon the track and escaped.'

"Think of an express train which 'whirled along at a speed of thirty-five miles an hour to-day.' But that was pretty fast in those days. We afterwards learned that Pete hid right near the tracks, knowing full well that the posse would go into the woods after him. Pete hammered his irons against rocks for four hours before he succeeded in releasing himself.

"When Pete was arrested in Springfield, Ohio, back in 1870, Chief Whitley of the United States Secret Service thought the arrest was important enough to justify his going to Springfield to see Pete. And he did just that. He saw Pete and tried to persuade him to give up counterfeiting. He promised him immunity if he would cooperate with the Government in running down counterfeiters. But Pete would have nothing of the plan.

" 'I think you had better accept my offer,' said the chief. 'Otherwise you will be kept right here.'

" 'Oh, I can get out of here all right,' said Pete.

" 'I guess you can't,' retorted the chief.

" 'Yes, I can,' insisted Pete. 'Where do you live and what is your room number?'

"The chief told him, but thought nothing about it.

" 'I'll come and see you at 10 to-night,' said Pete.

" 'I guess you won't,' said the chief. 'But I'll see you in the morning. I want you to think over my proposal.'

"That night at 10 o'clock the chief was in his room at the hotel making out his report when there sounded a knock at the door.

" 'Come in!' he yelled.

"And in walked Pete.

"The chief sprang for his revolver, which was on the table.

" 'You don't need that,' smiled Pete. 'I simply wanted to make a little social call.'

" 'Well, I'll be damned!' exploded the chief in astonishment.

" 'Are these cigars any good?' asked Pete as he helped himself to one of the Havanas on the table.

" 'Fine. Help yourself,' sneered the chief savagely.

"Pete broke the end of the cigar and soon was puffing away.

"'You lead a soft life, don't you, chief?' he asked.

"And so the conversation went on. The chief wanted to know how Pete had gotten out of prison.

"'Walked out, of course,' said Pete.

"And of course that didn't satisfy the chief.

"The town clock struck one, and Pete reached for his hat.

"'Well, guess I had better be going,' he said. 'The boys will miss me if I stay out too late.'

"And Pete returned to the prison. It later developed that he had paid one of the guards $1,000 to leave the prison for forty-five minutes. A few days later Pete left the prison again, but this time he didn't return.

"McCartnery operated for 25 years before a stop was finally put to his criminal practices. He operated under a dozen different names, and was arrested 52 times, but rarely was brought to trial, because each time he jumped his bail. He declared in his last years that several dishonest operatives found it well worth while to have him at large, because when he was caught he immediately attempted to buy his release, and he was usually able to pay well."

"Well, what became of Pete finally?" I asked.

"We never knew," said the veteran Government agent. "We do know that he dropped out of sight. My hunch is that he made a rich haul, went to some other city, took a new name, and there tried to live an honest life. Pete was getting old when I knew him, and I was only a youngster then. He said that he was through, and I think he really meant it."

The next man I saw was an English Scotland Yard operative, in this country on a case of international importance.

"Have you ever heard of Charles Peace?" he asked.

I told him that another English friend had told me years ago about the remarkable career of Peace, but that I had forgotten it.

"Charles Peace is undoubtedly the outstanding figure in nineteenth century of English crime," said my British friend. "He is the type of professional criminal who makes crime a business and sets about it methodically and persistently to the end. Here was a fellow possessing many of those qualities which go to make the successful man of action in all walks of life driven by circumstances to squander them on a criminal career.

"Peace's career as a burglar in London began in January, 1877, and continued until October, 1878. During that time this much-wanted man, under the very noses of the police, exercised with complete success his art as a burglar. He worked alone, depending wholly on his own mental and physical gifts, disposing in absolute secrecy of the proceeds of his work and living openly the life of a respectable and industrious old gentleman. Here indeed was a Doctor Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde in reality.

"Peace was finally caught, like all criminals, and was charged with murder. The community was shocked to learn that the nice old gentleman that all had learned to love and respect was in truth a rascal and a criminal, in fact many times a murderer. Peace was tried, convicted and executed. His case is remarkable because he succeeded in completely fooling the police for so long a period of time. Why, in two instances he actually helped the police hunt the man responsible for a crime which he himself had committed.

"Peace is a character of a day gone by, but the London police will never forget him."

The next person I asked to add to my list of notorious criminals was a college professor. I don't know why I asked him. But I did, and then I was curious to know how he would reply.

"To answer your question," he said, "we merely have to turn to Shakespeare. The most successful, and therefore perhaps the greatest, criminal in Shakespeare is King Claudius of Denmark. His murder of his brother by pouring a deadly poison into his ear while sleeping is so skillfully perpetrated as to leave no suspicion of foul play. But for a supernatural intervention, a contingency against which no murderer could be expected to have provided, the crime of

Claudius would never have been discovered. Smiling, jovial, genial as M. Derues or Doctor Palmer, King Claudius might have gone down to his grave in peace as the bluff, hearty man of action, while his introspective nephew would in all probability have ended his days in the cloister, regarded with amiable contempt by his bustling fellowmen. How Claudius got over the great difficulty of all poisoners, that of procuring the necessary poison without detection, we are not told. By what means he distilled 'the juice of cursed hebenon'; how the strange appearance of the late king's body, which 'an instant tetter' had barked about with 'vile and loathsome crust,' was explained to the multitude, we are left to imagine. There is no real evidence to show that Queen Gertrude was her lover's accomplice in her husband's murder. If that had been so, she would no doubt have been of considerable assistance to Claudius in the preparation of the crime. Yes, I would say that King Claudius is the next man to add to your list."

I next saw a man in the good old State of Missouri who knew the history of the famous James boys, and I expected him to launch right out into a series of stories about those notorious criminals.

"How many names have you?" my friend asked.

"Three," I answered.

"All right," he said. "Make Jesse James your fourth and Ed Spencer your fifth. But I want to tell you about Spencer, because he is living to-day, has robbed nearly thirty banks in Oklahoma and Texas, and without a doubt is the nerviest criminal alive in America. God only knows how long he will be alive, because the police of two states have taken oaths not to rest until they get him. Chances are that by the time you write this story he will have been caught.

"Spencer is a daylight holdup man. He has no friends, and takes no chances of being double-crossed. On the day of his crime he picks up a confederate. He never tells that man until fifteen minutes before the deed just where he is going to strike. He always operates during the noon hour, because then some of the employees are out of the bank he means to attack. He goes into the bank, lines 'em up, takes what he wants, and then beats it in one of the fastest cars this country has ever seen. And Ed has them so buffaloed that even the police in some cities have been afraid to go after him.

"Recently we had him cornered in a house. Bank operatives were on one side and county deputy sheriffs on the other. The instructions were to let no one escape from the house during the night. At four in the morning a door was heard to slam on the sheriff's side. At daybreak we raided the house. In it we found a man and his wife and two children. We asked for Ed Spencer.

"'Why, he left at 4 o'clock,' the man answered.

"Spencer is one of the remaining criminals of the old bandit days. He has been highly successful, but we will get him just as sure as God made green apples. Put Ed Spencer down twice on your list."

But I thought once would do. I now had five names. Where was I to get my sixth? Then I recalled that a Frenchman from the Paris police was in New York making a study of American police organization and methods. With the aid of a detective friend I found him.

"Did you ever hear of M. Derues de Cyrano de Bury, lord of Candeville, Herchies, and other places?" he asked, carefully spelling each word out for me.

"No," I replied.

"Well, he is one of the most remarkable criminals that the Paris police have ever had to deal with. He dates back to the year 1774. He was just an ordinary grocer," said the French detective. "He plotted the death of a relative whereby he was to have received a large fortune. Before the estate was settled he bought property for 130,000 livres—about $100,000—and he satisfied all of his ability to pay, although at the time he didn't have a cent. Through his wife he was entitled to a sum of 250,000 livres as her share of the property of a wealthy kinsman, one Despeignes-Duplessis, a country gentleman who was found murdered in his

house under very mysterious circumstances. Derues was himself the murderer.

"Later he killed the wife of the owner of the property which he was supposed to have purchased, and then tried to forge a document which was supposed to have been a bill of sale between the wife and Derues. Not having any money, he had hoped to prove that he had already paid for the estate by showing that he had a bill of sale for the property, also a receipt. This bill of sale carried the forged signature of the husband.

"Derues then went to Paris and masqueraded as the wife of the owner of the property. He had circulated the report that she quarreled with her husband, when in reality she had been killed and was in a trunk in the basement of the grocer's home. But to substantiate the report that the woman was in Paris, this grocer went to that city and there masqueraded as this woman. And of course reports came back to her husband.

"You see the complications. First there was a murder. Then there was the purchase of property. Then there was a second murder. Then the murderer masqueraded as the woman he had killed. Then the body of the woman was found. Derues denied his guilt and said that the woman had been ill, came to him for help, and he gave her some medicine. And he added that he had buried the body so as to relieve her husband of great mental suffering.

"Of course, Derues was tried and found guilty, but what is more interesting is that the court instructed that he should be 'broken on the wheel and burnt alive, and his ashes scattered to the four winds of heaven.' This order was carried out.

"I won't horrify you with the details of this crime. But it is one of the most unusual in the records of the Paris police."

I next went to an old-time newspaper editor and inquired to learn what he could tell me about crime and criminals.

"When I was a newspaper man we always thought that the most sensational crime story that broke in our generation, or the generation before us, was the murder of Dr. George Parkman, philanthropist of Boston, by Dr. John W. Webster, professor of chemistry at Harvard University. This took place in 1849.

"Doctor Parkman was one of Boston's distinguished citizens; in fact, he gave the land on which Harvard University's original medical school was built, and which later became a dental college. It was through Parkman that Professor Webster obtained his appointment.

"Professor Webster was an able man, but was cursed with a hot temper, and did not know how to live within his means. At one time he inherited $50,000 from his father, built a mansion in Cambridge, and then promptly proceeded to spend everything he possessed. He got into debt, and included Doctor Parkman among those from whom he borrowed money.

"Doctor Parkman was a relentless creditor, and so Professor Webster went to a relative of Parkman's, borrowed money to pay the doctor and gave as security for his debt a bill of sale on a collection of minerals he possessed, already mortgaged to Doctor Parkman.

"When Parkman learned of this he began a campaign of persecution. He even attended Professor Webster's classes and sat in the front row while the professor tried to lecture. Finally Webster invited Parkman to meet him at his laboratory. Doctor Parkman did so, the two men quarreled and Professor Webster in a fit of rage struck Parkman over the head with a heavy stick. He then proceeded to dismember the body. To do this he placed the body in a sink and allowed the water to run continually so that all blood would be carried away.

"Finally Doctor Parkman's legs were discovered and Webster was arrested. New England was all excitement. After a trial that attracted a great deal of attention, Doctor Webster was found guilty, and later he paid the death penalty.

"Here were all the elements of a great murder story. The man murdered was one of the most prominent citizens of Boston. The man who murdered him was a professor in one of our greatest universities. Added to that were gruesome details which could not be suppressed. In my life that story has never been equaled."

I next saw a surety company operator, of whom I inquired which criminal struck him as among the ten most notorious.

"Without a moment's hesitation I would say J. W. Stoddard," he said. "Stoddard was a forger who operated longer and accumulated more than any other forger in the history of this country. But finally, like all crooks, he was caught, tried and convicted and sentenced to the Tennessee State penitentiary. He was in prison but six months when he was pardoned and released. Later it was learned that he had forged his own pardon."

I next saw a writer of detective stories who has been a United States Secret Service operator, a detective for the French police in Paris, has studied at Lyons, at Scotland Yard and in Rome.

"Did you ever hear of Oscar of Vienna?" he asked. "You may think it funny that any one by the name of Oscar could be a criminal. But Oscar, after long service as a criminal, succeeded in getting on the Vienna police force and in being appointed to attend the Austrian school of crime. He attended it for two years, then resigned and proceeded to outwit the police. In one instance he left a cap on the scene of a crime in which he had put sawdust and red hairs, knowing that the police would discover both and immediately suspect some redheaded carpenter. Oscar was finally stopped when a woman played informant. When the police tried to arrest Oscar he shot himself. There is no character in the history of all European crime that will compare with this knave, who devoted three years to find out what the police knew, and then set about to beat the police. But he, too, lost."

I was getting near the end of my list. This time I decided to try a physician.

"Do you know the story of Iago and Othello?" he asked.

I reached for my hat.

"I have all the Shakespeare characters I want," I explained.

I now had nine names. Where was I to go to find the tenth and the last. I asked a detective friend of mine. He had no ideas.

"Why don't you add the last name?" he suggested. "What is the greatest or the most daring criminal you ever knew?"

And my answer to him is the conclusion of this little story.

"The most daring criminal I know is the man who recently made out 152 checks for amounts ranging from $15,000 and $20,000 and placed orders with Wall Street bond houses for $4,000,000 worth of stock. Here was a man who carefully planned something—whether he succeeded in doing what he wanted to do no one knows—which must have required at least two or three months. What happened? The stocks of many of the world's greatest corporations were jumped in price, only to drop back below normal when the forgeries were discovered. Here is a man who literally shook this country by its financial throat. A more colossal crime against property has never been attempted before. None of the operatives of the police, the banks, or the surety companies have succeeded in learning anything about this criminal. He is the man I will add to the list, making ten in all."

No two men will pick the same ten men. But it is interesting to get the views of men in different walks of life.

STEAL GEMS WORTH $10,000

JEWELS to the value of $10,000 were stolen from the rooms of Henry C. Wilcox, vice president of the American Surety Co., of 815 Park avenue, Manhattan, at the Huntington Bay Club recently. It was learned Mr. Wilcox kept the jewels in a case in a locked satchel, which he left in his rooms on the third floor. The thieves had opened the satchel and then relocked it. A gold watch and chair were also taken.

The gems included bracelets, pearl necklaces, lavalieres, diamond pins and pendants, and precious stones of ruby, sapphire, amethyst, pearl and diamond.

Five Deuces

By LLOYD LONERGAN

HOLLAND AVENUE, locally known as "Breakneck Hill" because of its steep grade, was a lonely spot at midnight that autumn evening. The only persons in sight were two men at a corner halfway down the "hill"—Patrolman Madigan, just completing a tour of duty, and Harry Carey, a morning newspaper man, homeward bound, who had stopped for a chat. Madigan pulled out his watch, looked at it angrily, sighed and yawned.

"Ten after twelve now," he complained. "My relief ought to have been along before this, and I'm dead tired out."

High up on the top of the hill appeared the reflection of the glaring headlights of a big automobile emerging from a side street. The machine was going almost at a footpace as it turned and headed toward the two men, but its speed as it approached them was constantly increasing. Carey, who was watching, grabbed the policeman by the arm.

"That's the kind of a chap who should be pinched," he commented, indicating the oncoming machine. "Why, he's easily going thirty-five. Lucky there's no traffic around to-night."

"Thinks he can get away with it," was Madigan's grim retort. "Well, he'll find he can't. The chief's mighty sore on guys like that; so are the judges." He stepped out into the middle of the road, held up his hand and shouted: "Stop that car! You're under arrest!"

"Come back, Madigan!" yelled Carey from his safe position on the sidewalk. "He isn't paying any attention to you. Look out!" he screamed as the auto drew nearer. "He means to run you down!"

By a flying leap the patrolman got back to the sidewalk just as the car swept by. It was one of those high-power racing machines, and the only occupant, a man crouched down in the driver's seat, was apparently thinking of nothing except the pleasure of his wild ride.

"Watch me fix him," grunted Madigan, his anger fully aroused. "I'll shoot away his tires," he went on as he drew his revolver and fired. Apparently his shot took effect, for the car swerved, took a half turn toward the sidewalk, and crashed into a store front, where it came to a halt in the midst of a perfect rain of fragments of glass.

"You've killed him!" yelled Carey excitedly as he started to run toward the spot. Madigan, pocketing his revolver, followed, trying to explain and to justify himself, but he was badly shaken, and the words came from him jerkily:

"Don't see how it could have happened; I aimed at the tires. Maybe it was the grade that fooled me, and I shot too high. Didn't mean to kill him, of course. It was an accident. Anyway, he brought it on himself."

Although the street had been deserted a moment before, the usual gaping crowd gathered with the usual speed, and the members thereof made very much of a nuisance of themselves until the reserves arrived and drove them back. Then, and not until then, did Madigan and a couple of detectives have a chance to pursue their investigations undisturbed. The most casual examination satisfied them that the unfortunate motorist had taken his last joy ride. The bullet had passed through the victim's neck from side to side, apparently causing instant death, and Madigan immediately saw that the position in which he was placed was a serious one. He had the right to arrest violators of traffic regulations, but he didn't

have the right to summarily execute them. It looked for the moment as if he would have to face a charge of manslaughter at the least, with every prospect of being convicted.

Carey, the other eye-witness, had no time to worry about the unfortunate bluecoat's predicament. The reporter had speedily recognized the victim, although he was bright enough to keep it to himself. He had a "big story," and the thing for him to do was to pass it on to his employers. So, while the detectives were conferring, Carey unobtrusively slipped through the crowd, hustled to the nearest telephone, and was brief and to the point in his talk with the night city editor.

"Police haven't identified the chap yet," he went on, after telling about the shooting. "And that gives us the edge on the other papers. Listen! The dead man is Jimmy Overstreet, son of the late banker—heir to $5,000,000. Mixed up in all sorts of scandals. Big chief among the wild women and all that. Obit department is full of it. Has been hitting the pace ever since his father died two years ago. Just about that time married a Miss Palmer, who came out of the West. Crazy about her then, but threw her in the discard a month ago. Running around now with Mazie Devereau of the Follies. Thought he planned to marry her. All right, I'll run around to the house and break the news. We're sure to beat out the police if I hustle," with which he hung up and started down the street on the run.

The "Overstreet Mansion" was an old-fashioned dwelling on a side avenue not far from the scene of the accident. An appropriate home for the dignified banker, James Overstreet, Sr., comfortable enough, but not stylish, and no one could understand why the young millionaire lived there. Jimmy's explanation was that he could go downtown when he wanted to see his friends, but that it was comforting to have a restful place to retire to when he desired to be undisturbed.

There were no signs of life about the house when Carey appeared, and not even the hall light was burning. The reporter rang the bell, waited, then rang again, and finally the door was unlocked, swung open as far as a sturdy chain would permit, and a tremulous voice inquired his business.

"It's news about Mr. Overstreet—bad news," said Carey. "I've been sent around from the police station."

There was an ejaculation from the person inside; in a moment the lights blazed up, the chain was withdrawn, and the door swung open wide. Then Carey could see the other, an old man, rather sketchily attired, trembling and ill at ease. Immediately they recognized each other.

"You are the newspaper person who called here last week," said the man in the house with a sigh of relief.

"And you're Mr. Overstreet's butler," replied the reporter. "Name's Holmes—Harmes."

"Hart, sir," corrected the other. "Hiram Hart. Yes, sir. But won't you step in? I know something serious has happened, or you wouldn't be here at this hour of the night," he went on, standing to one side to permit Carey to enter and closing the door behind him. Then he stood in the hall listening gravely as the reporter gave him the details of the tragedy.

"It *is* a shock, sir, but I had always feared——" He ceased abruptly, then resumed after a moment as though trying to make conversation. "Yes, sir. It is a terrible shock. But death comes like a thief in the night."

"I presume you will notify his relatives?" suggested Carey.

"Mr. Overstreet's only relative, so far as I know, is a cousin who lives somewhere out West," was the reply. "A minister of the gospel, I believe; one who lives a godly life."

"Entirely the opposite to your late master?" queried the reporter.

"I knew very little about Mr. Overstreet's habits," replied the butler primly. "I have been employed here for nearly thirty years." He sighed. "I must admit that things were very different when the father of Mr. James was alive."

The two men were so intent upon their conversation that they had not heard the footsteps of another visitor approaching the

house, and both started nervously when the door-bell rang.

"Probably the police," whispered Carey. "You'd better let them in."

The butler opened the door, but it wasn't the police. A well-dressed, much excited young woman was standing on the threshold, and she rushed to them with an eager question:

"Is Mr. Overstreet all right?"

The two men exchanged glances. Then Carey, taking upon himself the task of spokesman, replied gravely:

"Won't you come inside, miss? We have news. Yes. But I'd rather not talk out here."

Dumbly she followed him into the library, the butler preceding them and turning on the lights as he did so. Once in the room, the girl faced Carey pleadingly.

"Please tell me what happened," she cried. "I—I have a right to know. Mr. Overstreet and I were to have been married." She took a tiny handkerchief from her handbag, passed it over her eyes, then sank into a chair. It was plain to be seen that she was retaining her composure by an effort. And Carey wondered just how he should break the news to her.

"You are Miss Mazie Devereau?" he inquired.

"Correct," the girl replied. She forced a wan smile, then continued: "So you see why I am interested. Now tell me what happened. Don't be afraid I'll faint, or have hysterics, or anything of that kind. You don't have to break the news to me. Jimmy's dead! Isn't that what you're trying to tell me?"

Carey sighed with relief as he nodded. This girl had made his disagreeable task easy for him. Briefly he explained how Overstreet's car had come down the hill, of the shot and its fatal result. His hearer listened, sighed, then shook her head.

"It wasn't accident—or murder," she remarked decisively. "Jimmy committed suicide, did it in an unusual way, of course. Jimmy always was melodramatic. That was his style."

The reporter looked his astonishment. The girl laughed—a harsh little laugh, one of anger rather than amusement.

"If you knew Jimmy as well as I did, you'd not be one bit surprised at the method of his death," she explained. "He prided himself on the fact that he never did things like other men did them—was a slave to his own individuality, if you know what I mean.

"Well, anyhow, I had expected him to meet me after the performance to-night. He wasn't there, and I went home rather indignant at his desertion. When I got to my flat, Minnie, my maid, was waiting up. She said Jimmy had called about nine o'clock—seemed cheerful enough, but said he meant to kill himself. 'Tell Miss Devereau I will end my life to-night in a blaze of glory. The world has been cruel to me, so I will leave the world.' That's what he said to Minnie. The girl thought he was just talking booze nonsense, but I was not so sure. At about midnight I called up this house, couldn't get the number, so came here to investigate."

Carey looked at his watch. He had time to catch the city edition of his paper. Hastily he asked permission to use the telephone, and soon was breathlessly giving the night city editor the new developments. Then, as he listened to the man on the other end of the wire, a surprised expression came over his face. Finally he hung up and turned to Miss Devereau and the butler.

"This is certainly a queer case," he commented. "I was an eye-witness, and could have sworn that Patrolman Madigan killed Overstreet. Next Miss Devereau comes along and proves that the man was a suicide; his determination to end his life would explain why he drove the car down the hill so recklessly. And yet it is a fact that both those theories are incorrect."

"What do you mean?" demanded the chorus girl, rising excitedly.

"One of our men was at the morgue when the body was brought in," Carey explained. "Madigan's bullet had pierced his neck, but it wasn't that wound that had killed him. For Overstreet was dead before the car started down 'Breakneck Hill.' He had been stabbed through the heart, and the doc-

tors say that the blow had been inflicted several hours before the body was picked up."

Detective Sergeant O'Regan drifted into Captain Grosvenor's office in the Twelfth Precinct Station a few days later and smiled a superior smile.

"Cleaned up the Overstreet case," he announced. "Just booked the man who did it. He claims to be innocent, but will come through all right. Sure to confess pretty soon."

The captain straightened up and showed his interest.

"Some detectives work on one line and some on another," O'Regan maundered on. "But my motto always has been 'Find the woman in the case.' It's a cinch she's there. Right off the bat I was sure a jealous dame figured in the murder somewhere. It wasn't any one of these so-called stage beauties. They usually rob, but seldom murder. No, I passed them up, and followed my hunch to give the dead man's ex-wife the once over.

"Mrs. Overstreet that was is one of those society queens—mixed up in all sorts of high-toned affairs. Mighty proud of her standing, although she owes it altogether to the fact that she married an Overstreet. Now then, there's one peculiar thing about this dame. A year ago she hired a lawyer and served divorce papers on her husband. Half a dozen correspondents said to have been named and a scandal about to break that would have made the husband an outcast. Friends tried to get her to drop the case, but Mrs. O. declared she 'owed a duty to society to expose the wretch' and meant to pursue the matter to the bitter end. Everybody agrees she was sincere. And yet about the time the case was due for trial the woman withdrew her action, went to Reno, and got a decree for plain, simple desertion. Forgot all about her 'duty to society.' I wonder why? Don't you?"

"According to the records here this queen's maiden name was Mary Palmer. I got a tip, ran it down, and landed the goods. Mrs. Overstreet was brought up by her mother's sister, a Mrs. Palmer, of Akron, Ohio, but is really the daughter of Darius Denton, sent up for ten years for robbing widows and orphans and wrecking a bank he was president of out in a Middle West state. Mighty nasty story and would have wrecked the social career of the woman if her friends had known about it. Can't you figure it out as I do, that Overstreet got wind of these facts and used them to blackmail his wife into getting the non-exciting Reno divorce?"

"Listens good," assented the captain as he lighted a fresh cigar. "But even if it's true I don't see that it gets us anywhere."

"Just a minute, cap," replied the detective. "I got in touch with that penitentiary and discovered that Denton had been released two weeks ago and had taken a *train for the East.* The way I doped it out was that he landed here, found, after communication with his daughter, that Overstreet had blackmailed her and was about to marry again, and that Denton, to avenge his child, had decided to bump his son-in-law off. Maybe the woman knew what was planned—maybe she didn't. That's only a detail.

"Now Overstreet was very much of a man-about-town, but it was mighty easy to ascertain that he spent lots of his time at that roadhouse, The Grotto. There's a rumor that he's Jake Goldstein's financial backer. Wouldn't surprise me a bit. Anyway, he's usually there once or twice every evening. Had a date the night he was killed, the head waiter says, but didn't show up.

"The way I looked at it Denton would probably hang around the place, might land a job as waiter or handy man, just to be on the spot and ready to take advantage of a chance to kill Overstreet. I went out to The Grotto with Denton's photo, sent me from the penitentiary, but nobody at the amusement place could identify it. Then I scouted about the neighborhood. And at the very next place, who do you think was working as a gardener and under an assumed name? Right. It was Denton.

"He denied everything, of course, even swore he never had a daughter, and never even called on Mrs. Overstreet. I punched holes in that part of the story right away, for one of the attendants at her apartment

house had seen him going in there. Finally he admitted he *had* called, explaining his original lie by saying he had hoped to keep her name out of the matter. Nervy old bird! He'll only admit just as much as you can prove. He still swears he had nothing to do with the killing, never spoke to Overstreet in his life, wouldn't have known him if they had met.

"Now, here is the way I figure the murder happened. Denton got wise that Overstreet was one of The Grotto's steady customers. This dance hall is atop of a hill, just off the post road, and the private driveway is poorly paved and narrow. Motorists who know the neighborhood usually slow up before turning in. Denton was lurking around at the entrance, hailed the car when it appeared, pretended to give Overstreet some message, probably handed him a letter, and as he reached for it stabbed him. He didn't dare to leave the body where the murder was committed. That would bring the police to the roadhouse, and might bring about his own identification. So he put the corpse in the back seat of the car, hidden under the robes probably, and drove toward the city. Somewhere along the line he stopped to telephone Miss Devereau, pretending to be Overstreet. He knew she was at the theatre, and it would be easy to fool the maid. Then he continued to the top of 'Breakneck Hill,' placed the dead man in the driver's seat, started the car and jumped off. He probably figured that the body would be mangled in the wreck and the police would suppose the knife wound was a gash caused by the accident. And Miss Devereau's story of the phone message might have made us think that very thing.

"Yes, cap, Denton must have planned the whole thing carefully, but he slipped up at the very end. We *know* this auto crashed down 'Breakneck Hill' at 12:10 a. m. Can prove it in court by Madigan and the reporter. Denton's first story was that from 6 o'clock that evening until the next morning he was in the gardener's cottage, his quarters. It happens, however, that I located the conductor of the night car that runs out near The Grotto, and *he* identified Denton as a passenger he had on the 2 a. m. trip. So we know he *was* in the city at the time of the murder, and his alibi is smashed."

The same day that Denton was arrested, the "Overstreet Heir" arrived in town, the lawyers for the estate locating him after establishing that the dead man had neglected to make out a will. By this oversight on Jimmy Overstreet's part, Aaron Green, his poor first cousin, was transformed into a millionaire. Aaron was a shabby, shy, little man, pastor of an unpretentious, poorly attended church in Kerropolis, a tiny Ohio town, lacking in population, wealth or municipal ambition. His mother, now deceased, was the sister of Jimmy Overstreet's father, but the rich relatives had always ignored the poor ones. The minister moved into the Overstreet mansion, showing no elation whatsoever, but aroused much interest when he frankly outlined the plans he had in prospect.

"I wish to make it clear," he told the reporters, "that I only regard myself as the trustee of the vast fortune that has so unexpectedly come to me. Great wealth should be used, not for the selfish gratification of the individual, but for the good of the nation. I have always preached that, and went into the subject at length in the only letter I wrote to James Overstreet. I had never met either him or his father, but in my communication to the young man I ventured to outline to him his responsibilities, and to urge that he abandon his purposeless existence and do good in the world. For myself, of course, I asked nothing. My letter was couched in most courteous terms, but his reply was ribald and insulting. James kept my letter for several months, and Hart, the butler, now in my service, says his former employer would frequently read it over to his boon companions, all of them regarding it as a great joke.

"Hart, I might say, has been of wonderful help and encouragement to me at this time. He was in the service of the elder Overstreet, my uncle, and declares his first employer was a charitable man and a worthy citizen, who did much good with his

wealth. Hart, who is a sincere Christian and an earnest church member, joyfully tells me he is sure my uncle would approve of the plans I have in mind. It is my intention to retain $2,000 a year for myself and distribute the remainder of the fortune in church work and among worthy charitable societies. I am now working out the details of this plan."

Henry Carey, the reporter, made it his business to win the favor of the Rev. Aaron Green and, being a diplomatic young man, soon did so. Carey regarded the heir as "good copy" and interviewed him frequently and at length. Hence when he called one evening, Green greeted Carey with his placid smile, not noticing that his visitor was unusually excited.

"What do you think of this man Denton?" the reporter asked abruptly, after greetings had been exchanged. Green sank back into his chair, joined the tips of the fingers of his two hands, looked at them and sighed.

"An unfortunate case," he murmured. "Very sad, indeed. But Denton is unrepentant, a hardened character. Do you know," he continued, with a sad smile, "I went to the jail one day and offered to pray with him. Yes, I actually did. I regarded it as my duty. But he was most discourteous. Ordered me to leave him. Yes, yes. A hardened character."

"Do you think he killed your cousin?"

"I am sorry to say that there doesn't appear to be a doubt of it."

"Reverend, I've been working on this case," declared Carey earnestly, "and I've dug up a lot of surprising things. Let's go back a little—back about two years. The elder Overstreet was a fine man, mentally broad, morally sound, a good citizen—the exact opposite of his son. Jimmy was in his father's bad graces at the time of which I speak. A few days before his death the elder Overstreet ordered his lawyer to draft a will, leaving the bulk of his property to charity. I found this out through the former stenographer of Lawyer Gregory, who at that time was Overstreet's counsel. Collins, the stenographer, is a dope fiend now. Maybe he tells the truth, maybe he doesn't. Anyhow, he swears he typed the document and gave it to Gregory, who took it away with him. There's no proof that it was signed, for Gregory was killed in an auto accident a few days later. Just the same, no will was found when Overstreet died, and the son, as next of kin, inherited. Collins didn't do anything about the matter then, but recently, when he was down and out and needed coin for the dope, he thought he saw a chance to make a touch. Came up here and tried to blackmail Jimmy Overstreet. That was just a few days before the murder. Collins says Jimmy bluffed him out. Told him he couldn't prove a thing, and Collins, knowing it, sneaked away. For a time I thought he had croaked Overstreet, but I know better now."

He nodded at Green, gazing at him steadily for a moment, then continued:

"Funny how old Overstreet's will is going to be carried into effect, although the document has been destroyed, isn't it? And here's another funny thing, Reverend, isn't it strange that Jimmy Overstreet should have been murdered, right here in his own dwelling, right here in this room, when everybody believes he was killed out near that roadhouse?"

"What do you mean?" gasped Green in alarm, rising to his feet. His companion forced him back into his chair.

"How lucky for poor old Denton that the real murderer made one little slip," the reporter resumed. "He forgot that automobiles have speedometers—and also that garage employees are usually gamblers. And there are two sports in the Ajax Garage who are always playing automobile poker."

"Automobile poker?" questioned Green. "I—I—don't understand."

"Picking out hands from the license numbers of the cars. These chaps, however, had a variation of the game. Fully one hundred machines are stored at the Ajax by private owners, and the duty of the men I have in mind is to roll them out for the drivers. Each car they bring out is their poker hand. Get it? The trip speedometer they ignore, but the one that records the

total mileage is their oyster. It is made in five figures, you know, and that is just the size of a poker hand.

"Well, on the night of the murder the man who brought out the Overstreet car got high hand for the evening—five deuces. In other words, the machine at that moment had traveled 22,222 miles. After the accident the bunged-up car was taken back to the garage to be repaired. The workmen had a lot of rush orders just then, and there was no particular hurry about that job, so it was just put to one side. Yes, the car lay over in a far corner ignored, while the police were looking all over town for clues. But to-day a couple of men were detailed to fix up the Overstreet car. One of them was the chap who had held the high poker hand. Just by chance he looked at the speedometer, and was surprised to see it registered 22,223 miles. Naturally he hadn't forgotten the five deuces, and his opponent swears to them, too. Luckily for me, I drilled in around that time, and they passed me the tip. Then I got busy.

"You see, Reverend, it was easy to figure out what had happened after I knew that the car hadn't traveled more than a few blocks. It was a cinch that the auto had been brought around here, Overstreet killed, his body kept in the house until midnight, then put in the machine, which was driven around the corner to 'Breakneck Hill,' and left to slide down under its own power. The telephone call to Miss Devereau was a crafty piece of work. The whole affair was planned by a master mind. But Five Deuces take the pot. They show that the car never went out to The Grotto—never went anywhere. That's clear and can't be denied.

"It was a funny murder this, not done because of greed or jealousy or hatred, the cause of most such crimes. The fact is that a certain man knew that the elder Overstreet had planned to leave his money to charity; maybe he signed the document as one of the witnesses. Anyhow, he knew, or at least believed, that Jimmy Overstreet had suppressed the will. This man I speak about is deeply, sincerely religious, practically a fanatic on the subject. The announcement of the Devereau engagement forced him to take action, for he couldn't bear to see the Overstreet millions wasted on a chorus girl. So he killed Jimmy as a religious duty, and even now, when his crime has come to light, cannot see where he has done anything wrong. Believes his deed 'will redound to the cause of righteousness,' and maybe it will. For my part I don't think the law will hang him. He's —pretty sure to be sent to an insane asylum in the immediate future."

"Who? Are you accusing me? Do you mean me?" stammered the Rev. Aaron Green.

"Not at all," explained Carey. "I was just testing you out to see if you were an accomplice, but I guess not. Hart read your letter to Overstreet and believed in your sincerity. He knew you would inherit if Jimmy died without making a will and was convinced you'd spend the money in charity, just as you have promised to do. He believes 'some higher power' led you to pen that message to Jimmy Overstreet and give him an opportunity to see it, and 'hours of prayer' nerved him to kill his employer.

"Yes, we pinched Hart an hour ago. He made a full confession and glories in his deed. You thought it was his night out, but you'll never see him here again."

The Curse of Nadir

By EDWIN A. GOEWEY

PART ONE

WITHIN a few hundred feet of the point where Broadway leaves most of the prosaic evidences of barter and trade and plunges into a realm of make-believe and incandescents was situated the modest little curio shop of Ivan Platoff, or "Old Ivan," as the gentle-mannered and ever-smiling Russian was familiarly known by his neighbors.

Michael O'Brien, dean of the theatrical district police, looked upon Platoff as his particular protégé, and as he strolled past the converted dwelling in which the shop was located, and noted his friend seated in a chair near the door, head thrown back and newspaper lying neglected upon his knees, he smiled and muttered:

"Sleep on, old man, and pleasant dreams. And here's hopin' you'll not be waked till you're rested."

As O'Brien continued on his way, satisfied alike with himself and the ample noonday meal that he had just eaten, the door was opened a few inches and a man peered after the retreating form of the policeman. When the latter disappeared down the thoroughfare the man came out boldly, closed the door, and melted into the passing throng.

The officer halted at the corner and touched his cap to a beautiful, raven-haired miss, radiant as the day itself, who approached smiling, her arms filled with parcels.

"Good-afternoon, Miss Ora. I was just after thinkin' about you when I saw your good father asleep in his chair. Sure 'tis a lucky man he is to have such a bewitching colleen for a daughter."

"Flattery, Mr. O'Brien. You surely are a true son of Erin."

He smiled aside the thrust at his blarney and kept the girl interested with his flow of jest and banter while they walked to the shop.

As he turned away a piercing cry from the girl brought him about sharply. He ran to the place to find her, wild-eyed and trembling, leaning against the tiny counter and clinging to it for support.

"What's the matter, child?" he gasped.

She tried to answer, but choked on the words and pointed weakly toward the chair.

O'Brien leaned over and studied the old man's features. Then he placed his hand gently upon Ivan's forehead:

"Dead!" he said.

She shuddered and turned the frightened stare of her great eyes upon him.

"Yes. He died while I was out. Oh, why did I leave him alone?"

Face to face with one of the hard realities of life, she swayed, but as the policeman stepped toward her she dropped to her knees beside the silent figure and threw her arms about it.

O'Brien turned toward the door to send away several persons, who, attracted by the girl's cry, were peering through the glass. A light-skinned negro in overalls pushed his way to the door and entered, pausing in wonderment as he noted the sobbing girl kneeling beside her father.

"What's happened?" he asked.

"Who are you?" questioned the policeman, locking the door and drawing the shade.

"I'm Joe, the janitor. I saw the crowd when I brought the elevator down, and I thought something might be wrong."

"Mr. Platoff is dead," said O'Brien.

The man gave a startled gasp.

"It can't be, sir. I saw him talking to a man just a few minutes ago. I brought him some tobacco. I do errands for him and Miss Ora. He was all right then."

The girl turned her head.

"Joe is the caretaker," she said. "He works for us frequently."

The mulatto pulled off his cap and tried to speak to her, but was too frightened to do more than mumble.

"Do you want me for anything, miss?"

She shook her head. Looking over his shoulder as though still unwilling to believe what he saw, the janitor tiptoed to the door. "If you want me," he said to O'Brien, "I'll be in the hall. Maybe there'll be an errand to do."

"All right. Hang around the building until the doctor comes. He may want to talk to you."

The caretaker, continuing to shake his head as though still unconvinced, left the shop.

The policeman said a few words intended to comfort the girl. Then he called the police station on the telephone and asked for Detective Harrison, a veteran "tenderloin" thief catcher, and also a friend of Platoff and his daughter.

Briefly he explained what had occurred. In reply to a query he said:

"Looks like heart disease, all right. The janitor saw him talkin' to a customer just a little while ago. Better come over and look around, though nothing seems to have been disturbed. A lot of valuable stuff here, you know."

When the policeman again approached the girl she was more composed, and he suggested that she notify her relatives and request some of them to come to her.

"We have no relatives here," she replied.

"But you have friends. There's Mr. Stanley. I see him here often."

"Yes." A slight flush drove the white from her cheeks momentarily. "I will call him. He will come."

The officer heard her call the number of a club in not far distant Fifth avenue, and a moment later she said:

"Norwood, this is Ora. Please come at once. Something dreadful has happened."

A pause.

"No, I am all right. It is father. I found him dead when I returned. Please hurry."

Norwood Stanley, to whom the girl had spoken, was, as the policeman suspected, her sweetheart. Thirty-five, good-looking, with a physique and carriage indicative of unusual athletic ability, he would have attracted more than a passing glance anywhere. But the student of physiognomy would have noted more: a determined jaw and the clear, penetrating eyes of the analyst. An aristocrat, possessed of independent means, he had wandered far—sometimes as a soldier-of-fortune and not infrequently a representative of this country on special missions. It was while in Russia as a Secret Service agent for the United States Government that he first met Platoff and his beautiful daughter. Circumstances called them to America, and he gave up his mission and returned to his native shores that he might be near her.

To satisfy his craving for excitement and adventure he had worked with the New York police on many occasions, and was on intimate terms with the abler men of the metropolitan department. And these officers appreciated his help, for he had displayed an ability in the solving of unusual crimes which they looked upon as well nigh uncanny.

Ora gathered herself together as she turned from the telephone and, somewhat to the surprise of O'Brien, who had placed his handkerchief over the face of the dead man, stated that she would look about and see if anything had been stolen. She moved from point to point, while the policeman stepped to the door and peered at the curious crowd gathered outside.

Seeing that he was not watching her, she stepped to the safe, modern and unusually large for such a modest place, and hidden from the front behind a high screen. The door was ajar, and with trembling hands she pulled it open and eagerly looked inside.

Her worst fears were realized. An inner compartment, in which lay her chief interest, also was open, her father's keys hanging in the lock. She reached inside.

"Gone," she whispered, when her fingers met nothing.

A knock at the door made her jump, uttering a little cry, and as O'Brien fumbled at the lock she closed the safe and swung the combination. For a moment her emotions threatened to overcome her, but she forced a show of calmness. Stepping from behind the screen, she placed her tiny hand in the great paw of Detective Harrison, whom the policeman had admitted. A two-fisted cop of the old school, whose methods were direct and manners brusque, he tried awkwardly to say something consoling. Then he led her to a rear room, where he advised her to await the arrival of the medical examiner.

"Everything appears to be regular," he said to O'Brien after an examination. "Guess the old fellow passed out with heart disease. No marks, nothing upset. Not a bad death at that. Just slipped over the line readin' his paper."

"Too bad for the girl, though," replied the policeman. "No relatives in America. She's waitin' for Mr. Stanley to come."

"Engaged, ain't they?"

"I think so."

"Stanley's a smart feller, all right. Too bad he ain't on the force. He's got some high-brow notions about nabbin' crooks, but he sure does get 'em. This will be a body blow for him, all right. He and the old man sure were strong for each other."

A rattle at the door interrupted and they admitted Stanley. Nodding to the officers, he looked earnestly at the figure huddled in the chair and hastened to the rear room in response to Harrison's gesture.

Ora stretched out her arms as he entered. He caught the stricken, trembling girl to him, and she burst into sobs against his shoulder.

"It is so terribly sudden, so dreadful! I can't understand it."

He stroked her hair gently, speaking words of comfort, then placed her in a chair and seated himself beside her.

"Oh, Norwood, if I had been here it would not have happened. I am to blame."

"Blame? For what? Your presence could not have averted his death."

"You don't understand." She shuddered and clung to him. "It was not a natural death, as you think. Something killed him."

A shadow of amazement froze his features.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"The great diamond is gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes. It has been stolen."

"But the safe was locked."

"No, it was open. Father has grown forgetful of late, and often left it so, despite my warnings. His keys were used to unlock the inner compartment in which the gem was kept."

For a time Stanley sat in puzzled thought.

"Ora," he said finally, "I must leave you here for a time—I must examine things for myself. Be brave until I return."

She pressed his hand. He kissed her and returned to the shop, closing the door of the inner room.

"The medical examiner ought to be here soon," said Harrison.

"Very good," replied Stanley, and he made a significant motion toward the policeman. The detective understood.

"Hey, O'Brien," he said, "I'll stay here with Mr. Stanley. You better go outside and chase that mob."

The officer nodded and went into the street.

"What was that signal for?" queried the puzzled detective.

"Harrison, you and I have successfully handled some difficult cases, but we got our man each time because we said nothing to others until our trap was ready to be sprung."

"That's true. But what's wrong here?"

"We are going to work together again, Harrison, but I want your promise that you will say nothing of what I shall tell you until I give the word. Not even to the medical examiner. You understand?"

"I'll play dumb, all right. But I don't get you. What's the answer?"

"I believe that Ivan Platoff was either frightened to death or murdered."

"The devil you say!"

"Yes. Something very valuable has been stolen from the safe—something which he would have defended with his life. I'll tell you more later, but now I must hasten with my work. The doctor may be here any moment."

"Maybe the janitor can give us a clue. He got some tobacco for the old man before noon. He said he was chipper then and was talking with a customer. O'Brien told him to hang around the hall so's to be handy to answer questions."

"We'll talk to him later. There are more important things to be done here now."

Drawing away the handkerchief, Stanley gazed in pity at the features of his old friend. Then, steeling himself for the task ahead, he became, for the time being, a criminologist.

Looking at the newspaper clutched in the lifeless fingers, his eyes narrowed and he made a careful examination of the hands, after which he searched the pockets of the dead man's clothing and the floor about the chair. Still unsatisfied, he went to the workbench near the window, every article on which he studied with deliberate care. Returning to the chair, a time-worn piece of ancient furniture, he scanned it inch by inch, and from one of the cracked arms took a bit of something which, after a tense scrutiny, he placed in his wallet.

With a powerful lens he next turned his attention to the newspaper, looking at it so closely that his face almost touched the page. Harrison, watching silent and intent, noted the man, whom he considered without nerves, suddenly go chalk white.

Rising, the investigator peered intently into the dead man's eyes, felt the neck muscles, and then gently raised the head. Again he bent—so close that his forehead was buried in the hair of the old man.

"Harrison," he ordered, "hold your flashlight here."

The detective obeyed, and Stanley, parting the hair just above the base of the brain, studied a small red wound.

Replacing Platoff's head upon the chair exactly as he had found it, he again covered it with the handkerchief.

"Harrison," he said, the slight trembling of his voice being offset by a look which boded ill for some one, "Ivan was murdered, and by a most unusual type of criminal. Unless the medical examiner learns the truth for himself, we shall say nothing at this time. We will let the slayer think that the authorities are convinced that the death was from natural causes. If we raise the cry of murder now the killer will disappear and may get beyond our reach before we have a clue to his identity."

"I'll do anything you say. You get wise to things that are past me. But how was he killed?"

"He was murdered by poison. The murderer inljected it with a hypodermic needle, where the hair concealed the tiny wound."

"Do you know what poison it was?"

"Yes. It is called racia by chemists, and is well known in India, where it is a favorite murder weapon among the Hindus. It is composed of the venom taken from the cobra and a deadly drug made from the castor-oil bean. A few drops introduced directly into the veins causes instant paralysis, and in practically no time the victim is dead. It leaves few telltale evidences, and the person killed presents the appearance of one who has died from heart disease or apoplexy."

"But you got wise to it."

"Only because I learned of this devilish poison while in India. For those familiar with it there are clues, provided the body is found within a few hours after the murder. They are a most unusual but not unpleasant odor and a deep purple stain on anything which it touches, except the human skin. Look at the left cuff near the sleeve. See the stain? The murderer let a drop fall there in his haste."

"And that gave you the tip?"

"There were many things before I saw that. The newspaper is the *Herald*. Ivan could not read English. Besides, his eyesight was not of the best, and he would have used his glasses had he been reading. These facts, coupled with the finding of his spectacles and several Russian papers on

his workbench, convinced me that something was wrong. Then I also noted that the newspaper, probably snatched from that pile on the counter used for wrapping parcels, had been placed in his hands after death. The slayer was in such a hurry that he tore the sheets, forced them between the stiffened fingers, and dislocated the right thumb in his effort to get the paper between it and the first finger."

"I follow you so far."

"It was while looking at Ivan's hands that I saw the purple stain, and sufficient of the odor remained to identify it. The condition of the muscles also indicated the presence of the poison, and together we found the wound. The murderer is no ordinary thug, but a resourceful criminal of a high order of intelligence."

"But why didn't Ivan make a fight for his life?"

"My theory is that he knew the murderer, did not fear him, and remained seated when he entered. Walking behind the unsuspecting old man, the slayer injected the poison, took his keys and robbed the safe while he was dying, then adjusted the paper and fled. He knew that death would appear natural, and with apparently nothing disturbed he figured no crime would be suspected."

The arrival of the medical examiner interrupted them. He was acquainted with Stanley, and upon being informed of his relationship to the Platoff family hastened to make his examination. Almost from the outset he considered the case one of heart disease, and when he learned that nothing in the place appeared to have been disturbed, and by whom and how Ivan was found dead, he stated that the funeral arrangements might proceed, as he would report death from natural causes.

"Now what?" questioned Harrison, when the physician had departed and O'Brien had returned to his patrol.

"Call the janitor. I want to question him,"

Joe came promptly, and as he waited, cap in hand, Stanley gave him a thorough but hurried scrutiny, taking in everything from his frightened face to his shabby shoes.

"You were in here this morning?" questioned Stanley.

"Yes, sir. Mr. Platoff called me. It was some time between eleven and twelve. He sent me for some tobacco. I was here again when I brought it."

"Was any one else here at either time?"

"When I came back, sir, Mr. Platoff was sitting right where he is now, and a man was standing near him talking. They appeared to know each other very well, for they laughed while they talked."

Harrison shot a meaning glance at Stanley, but the latter paid no heed.

"Ever see this man before?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see him go out?"

"No. I left just as soon as I put the tobacco on the counter and Mr. Platoff paid me."

"Can you describe the man?"

"Yes. He was quite tall and rather slim. He was erect, like a soldier, with white hair and mustache. He dressed like a very fashionable gentleman, wore glasses with a ribbon and carried a cane."

"Very good. I think possibly I know him," said Stanley. "Did you see any one else here?"

"Yes, sir. But that was earlier, before Miss Platoff went out. I only saw him through the window. He was talking with Mr. Platoff when his daughter left. He was short and heavy, as I remember. He had reddish hair and beard, and looked like a workingman.

"Perhaps you saw him here before?"

"No, sir."

"Was he a Russian?"

"I could not say."

"Did you see him leave?"

"I did not. Is anything wrong, sir?"

"Nothing. But we thought some one might have been here when Mr. Platoff died, became frightened and ran away. We would like to learn if Mr. Platoff left a message when he was dying. That is all, Joe. You can go now. I will call you if there are any errands."

When they were again alone Stanley said:

"Let me do all the talking to Miss Ora.

She is not to know it was a murder—yet. The first man the janitor described was Count Borolsky, an intimate friend of the family and the man in whose keeping the diamond stolen from the safe was placed by a group of prominent Russians now residing in this country. I have met him on a few occasions. The other man I do not know. But we must obtain more information before we speculate further. Let us talk to Miss Ora."

In the rear room they were greeted by a questioning look from the girl, but Stanley shook his head.

"The medical examiner has determined that your father had a heart stroke," he said gently. "I shall take you to the house of my sister until we know more definitely about the future, and there the funeral will take place."

The girl resumed her soft weeping, but Stanley begged her to compose herself and answer a few questions.

"The janitor has told me that a man was with your father when you left the shop. Do you remember him?"

"Yes," she replied, "but I do not believe he was the thief. He was a Russian who owns a small shop downtown, and in the last few days he was here several times and purchased many inexpensive articles."

"Do you know positively that he keeps a shop?"

"No, but he told us so. He had not been in this country long, and talked with us only in Russian."

"Please describe him."

"He was short and rather stout, with black hair and beard and rather well dressed."

"Joe stated that his hair and beard were red."

"He was mistaken. I saw the man several times."

"Did you notice anything else about him which would help to identify him?"

"Yes. The first finger of his right hand was missing."

"That is important. Was Count Borolsky here this morning?"

"No."

"Joe said that a man answering his description was here just before noon."

The girl gave a glad cry.

"Oh, maybe father gave him the diamond and it was not stolen," she said.

"Many things will be solved if he has it in his possession," replied Stanley enigmatically, flashing a glance at Harrison. "I will see the Count at his rooms as soon as I have taken you to my sister's. Harrison, get somebody to watch this place night and day, and then come to the Ridgewood Apartments. I will meet you at the main entrance. Borolsky lives there."

The Russian nobleman, somewhat past middle age, of commanding, military bearing and with the *savoir faire* of the man of the world, rose from his desk as Stanley and Harrison were ushered into his apartment. He may have been surprised, but did not show it, and, acknowledging the introduction to the detective, grasped the hand of the other with a great deal of warmth.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, my dear Stanley," he said. "I am delighted to see you."

Acknowledging the greeting, Stanley said:

"Count, we are here on a most important errand, and I desire to ask you some personal questions. You may talk freely before Harrison. I infer that we are safe from eavesdroppers."

The Russian elevated his brows slightly.

"This is my conference chamber. With the door closed, we cannot be overheard. But pray do not keep me in suspense. Your conduct suggests something momentous," and he motioned them to seats.

"Count Borolsky," said Stanley, "Ivan Platoff is dead. He was found dead this afternoon by his daughter when she returned to the shop."

The man opened his lips to speak, but his emotion prevented utterance for a time. Then, mastering himself, he inquired:

"What killed him?"

"The medical examiner pronounced it heart disease."

"Mr. Stanley, you know how I loved Ivan. The blow really hurts. It is so unexpected."

"You saw him recently?"

"To-day, but a few hours ago, in his shop. He was in the best of spirits."

The detective moved uneasily, but remained silent.

"You must nerve yourself for another shock," continued Stanley.

The Russian leaned forward expectantly.

"The great diamond is gone from Platoff's safe."

For a moment it appeared as if the nobleman would collapse—the muscles in his neck stood out like whipcords and his face flushed red, then went white.

"My God!" he finally gasped, rising shakily from his chair. "You can't be serious."

"It is gone—stolen. Some one took it, probably right after Ivan's death. They used his keys to rob the inner compartment of the safe."

Borolsky dropped into his chair, covered his face and shook as though with a chill. Then he pulled himself together.

"I know I should not consider material things while my friend lies dead," he said, "but you know what the loss of that gem means to me. It was entrusted to me by the others. I never can explain its loss."

"Count Borolsky," interrupted Stanley, "with the assistance of Harrison I am going to try and recover the diamond. But I shall require your help also. When you and Ivan showed me the gem I appreciated its value, and you told me that you and other monarchists living here intended that some day it would be one of the crown jewels of the person whom you hoped to see presiding over the destinies of Russia as the next Czar. Now I trust that you will tell me everything—particularly why anything so precious was left in a place like Ivan's shop."

"You surely are entitled to hear the whole story now," replied Borolsky. "It was criminal carelessness for me to take such a risk, but that act is gone past recall. That gem, so beautiful to look upon, is a stone accursed, for it has been linked with outrage and death for hundreds of years. It was known as the Orloff, and was second in size only to the Great Orloff, among the gems which belonged to the royal family of Russia. First I will tell you of its early history, which I learned in the years that I was in diplomatic service in India."

A meaning glance, unnoticed by the narrator, passed between the visitors.

(To be continued.)

A DEADLY DUEL

A DUEL to the death, staged in broad daylight, in which two men, both wounded, lay prone on the sidewalk, each firing shot after shot at the other in an effort to extinguish his life, was witnessed recently by more than a hundred persons who cowered in doorways powerless to interfere.

Suddenly, as they watched, the body of one went limp and the pistol which the instant before was spouting lead and flame slipped from his hand. Too dazed to seek to stop him, they saw the other man rise weakly to his feet, his hand clutching his breast, and stagger out of sight around a corner. When the police arrived he had disappeared and no trace of him could be found.

The dead man was Giuseppi di Matteo, twenty-nine, of No. 4303 First avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y., who was identified by his sweetheart, Mary Gespito, eighteen, of No. 239 42d street, Brooklyn, who had been drawn to the scene by the firing. She had heard the sound from her home, a stone's throw away. She could assign no reason for the shooting.

The two met at 41st street and Second avenue, Brooklyn, shortly after 3 o'clock. The street, which is the center of a large Italian population, was thronged. Without a word the men opened fire. At the first shots both fell to the sidewalk, wounded. Fully a dozen shots were fired before the fatal one struck di Matteo.

Who Plays With Fire

By DOUGLAS DOLD

I DIDN'T want to be in the room. I hate scenes, and I foresaw this one was going to be no joke, but Mr. St. Loches had insisted on my presence as an essential witness. I could only hope that when Clyde Ferris did arrive he would preserve his usual suave composure.

The May fire in the beautifully tiled fireplace crackled cheerfully. The weather was very sharp, but the fire was the only cheerful one of us.

Mr. St. Loches lay back in his chair and glared at the blaze. Behind him his valet waited in impenetrable patience. Collins was a treasure of years standing, a forty-year-old fellow who called himself a New Orleans Creole, and who looked like a Spaniard. He was medium-sized, clean-shaven and partly bald, with a plump, rather good-looking face, set with two observant eyes.

As to me—well, what's the use of talking about me? I was only John Montaigne, the man who loved Julie St. Loches best of all, and had to hide it, because she was engaged to the author, Clyde Ferris.

Ferris had two novels out and was known in the reviews as a new star in the literary firmament.

As Mr. St. Loches had insisted, he needed a witness concerning what he said to Ferris; I was in the unhappy position of "next friend." Yet I'd have been more than human if I hadn't been full of curiosity as to what Ferris had done. Had the truth come out about his bizarrely handsome friend, Zelee Montez, the South American dancer, or about his several other more or less well-known affairs?

My thoughts were interrupted by the entrance of Ferris, whom a servant admitted.

The author came in smiling, caressing, in his usual affected way, his little clipped mustache. His carriage was as easy as his manners were polished. Women usually labeled him charming; perhaps because he experimented on them with the complimentary phrases he intended to have the hero say to the heroine. His voice was flexible, smooth, rather musical; he was about thirty-eight, good-looking, five feet eight inches in height, he and Julie standing exactly even, whereas I could "eat hominy off their heads."

Mr. St. Loches greeted him with a snarl of

"So you're here!"

Ferris stared.

"Rather," he said, dropping calmly into a chair, after nodding to me. "You sent for me, didn't you?"

"Sir, I did. Collins, go fetch Miss Julie."

Julie St. Loches had come to live with her grandfather about six months before.

She was scarcely nineteen, sweet, impetuous, flower-faced, golden-haired. Her voice was full of laughter and caresses. She was a streak of sunshine in the old St. Loches home. It gave me a dull, perpetual ache to think such a girl, in all her wholesome purity, would belong to a many-syllabled piece of rotten suavity like Clyde Ferris. But what could I do? Decent fellows, and I hope I'm one, don't go around telling girls the truth about their fiancés. Sometimes I wish we could!

When Julie came in Ferris gave her his chair with deferential courtesy, quite as if she'd been a princess, and she blushed at him charmingly. Old Mr. St. Loches scowled and made short work of coming down to brass tacks. He said:

"Look, Ferris, you've a new manuscript, a novel, accepted, haven't you?"

"Certainly. It's called 'Who Plays With Fire.'"

Mr. St. Loches said slowly, dangerously:

"Clyde, one day while you were visiting the Peterses in Pierreville, twenty miles from here, Mrs. Peters asked you to assort a trunkful of old papers for her. You did it, perhaps hoping then for plots. You found one in a private journal which should long ago have been burned—the journal of her grandmother relating the hidden story of my great-grandmother, Lucienne Harrington-Archer. That story makes up your infernal novel, 'Who Plays With Fire.' You used Archer Court and its people so any one would recognize them."

From the first word of St. Loches's attack the face of Ferris had grown utterly expressionless. He was silent. It was Julie who broke in:

"Oh, grandfather, dear, don't talk in so strange a tone! Lots of people like to be put in stories. It makes them feel important."

Old St. Loches turned on her swiftly, intensely, bitterly.

"Will it make *you* feel 'important' when I tell you that Ferris's novel is the scandal of the Harrington Archers, till now so carefully buried, the fact that your great-grandmother had a terrible history behind her beautiful face? That beastly novel, that damned revealing novel, will make us a byword through the whole of South Carolina! We shall have to leave Charleston."

Julie gasped. I felt like gasping, too, for I was a Charlestonian myself. I knew that nowhere on earth does even the remotest taint of scandal affect a family's feeling as it does in that quaintest yet haughtiest of cities.

Ferris said coolly:

"How and from whom did you get all this stuff about my novel?"

"Sir, a young girl, for whose education I paid; a girl of a fine family who lost everything is a reader in the firm of Hartley & Hartly in New York, your publishers. The moment she read the sheets she recognized, with horror, what you have done. She at once sat down and wrote to me fully, I may say voluminously. The whole miserable, unhappy, damning story is set forth in your novel, and, by heavens, you have actually kept the names! Though even if the names were changed, any fool would recognize the place, the people—everything!"

Ferris flicked a bit of dust from his sleeve with his monogrammed handkerchief. He said gently:

"Surely I needn't tell you that when, looking over the trunk, I learned all their story, I never dreamed they were related to you! You know my time has been spent mostly in New York, my mother being a New Yorker and living there after father's death. I'm not up in the genealogies of Charleston. Far from it! I couldn't even tell you what my own maternal great-grandmother's name was. Few recall such things nowadays."

"That relieves the situation somewhat, but the young reader tells me she warned you instantly of what you had done."

"Mm! So *that* was the squeaky little 'long-distance' voice that wouldn't give its name!"

"Yet no move has been made to withdraw the novel from publication."

"Impossible, you know. My contracts——"

"Sir, a gentleman in such a case would compel his publishers to destroy the novel."

"Do you want me to ruin myself?"

"No. I haven't much money I can call my own. I live on an annuity, but outside of that I've five thousand in cash. I'll pay you every cent for the novel."

"Sorry. Can't be done. I'm no blackmailer. And I stand to make fifteen thousand on this book. It's—well, frankly, it's a wonderful piece of work."

His voice rang with an enthusiasm inconceivable to me; he had buried his honor in his artistry.

"Do you want to ruin the family name of the girl you are going to marry?"

"Oh, come, Mr. St. Loches, why talk so tragically of a slip on the part of a pretty girl who lived a hundred years ago?"

"Sir, the history of that unhappy woman was a succession of errors. She might have been a reincarnation from the days of

Charles the Second, when virtue in woman had become almost a forgotten thing, and your novel so described her. Every newspaper would snatch it from your detestable pages and headline it as the secret history of the ancestress of the proud St. Loches in Charleston. We should have to leave Charleston. We should have to change our names."

"Oh, Clyde will destroy the book; of course he will," Julie cried in a sweet, shrill insistence. "Clyde is a gentleman, grandfather, dear. He'll do the right thing."

Clyde flushed angrily. He shot an annoyed glance at me, as though asking why the devil I didn't leave. I merely looked bland. Mr. St. Loches caught the look. He said sharply:

"John is here because I asked him to stay. I want him to bear witness that I demand of you, as a man of honor, the entire destruction of that novel."

Clyde Ferris sprang up irritably.

"Good heavens, impossible, I tell you! Impossible!"

"Impossible?" gasped Julie. She added dangerously: "Do you realize that if you don't withdraw it you lose me?"

At the threat a nasty little sneer came on his lips.

"My dear Julie, there are, if you will pardon me, plenty of other pretty girls in the world, but my novel is my best, and could never have a duplicate."

At the insult to this dearest of girls I started forward with clenched fists. I'd always known Ferris was rotten spoiled. But this—— The valet moved as I did. But old Mr. St. Loches went further. He grabbed from a near-by stand a small revolver. But Julie, who had flushed scarlet at this cool retort of Ferris, flung herself on the old man and tore the pistol from him.

"Grandfather," she cried, "not that! Do you suppose I care what he says? I am glad to know the truth about him. I might have married this cad." She turned on Ferris, thrusting the pistol into her blouse.

A sudden maturity had come over her. She raised level blue eyes to his dark, keen orbs.

"If I had known I was only one of the many in your estimation, I'd never have taken your ring. Here it is."

Bowing courteously, he took the ring and coolly slipped it in his pocket. I now saw that only one thing in the world was really dear to Ferris—his manuscripts.

St. Loches stammered in a passion-choked voice:

"D-does this mean that damnable book will be published?"

"I'll change the names, sir, though that means great trouble and expense."

"The names! You must destroy the whole venomous thing!"

"And my future with my publishers? No. Come, Mr. St. Loches, be reasonable. People don't look on scandal seriously nowadays. It may amuse them, but they don't cut others for it. Why, I could tell you tales of New York's so-called Four Hundred."

"Keep your dirty stories in the filthy cellar of your filthy mind," Mr. St. Loches thundered. "Leave my house, sir! My grandson, Major St. Loches, is due here shortly on leave. He will take the matter up with you."

"I'll be pleased to make him hear reason," Ferris retorted. Turning on his heel, he left without another word.

It was a week later, two days after Major St. Loches returned, that Henry Rossigny, dining with me at our club, suddenly leaned forward confidentially.

"I say, John," he observed in a low voice, "you know how ramshackle the old Hotel LeVale is getting?"

"I told you to move before it tumbled around your ears."

"Oh, well, the chef's delightful! But not a door fits. My rooms ensuite. Ferris has the one next, a huge affair. His damned typewriter (he composes on it) annoys me frightfully! Even when he writes longhand I can actually hear his pen squeak. I'll have to move. Damn an author, anyway! Books ought to grow on trees.

"But last night I got some interest out of Ferris. Major St. Loches called on Ferris and gave him the very devil! Tried to make him promise in writing to destroy his new novel. I finally understood why. I wasn't

listening, y' understand. The rooms might be in one. Couldn't help hearing."

"What was the upshot?" I asked very anxiously.

"Ferris refused quite nastily, y' know. And St. Loches distinctly told him that if he didn't sign that promise within forty-eight hours he, the major, would kill him as he would a rattlesnake."

"And Ferris——"

"Ferris laughed. He said: 'You can throw scares into the privates under you; not into me.'"

"D' you think Major Loches *was* only throwing a scare into him?"

"Dunno! The St. Loches haven't that name. I think I'd 'a' signed in Ferris's place."

"Rossigny, for God's sake keep all this quiet. It's a grave matter. If you talk you may precipitate hell."

He promised. But could he keep his promise? Rossigny loved to talk!

Forty-eight hours elapsed. Ferris had not come across, or the St. Locheses would have told me.

Came now the night of the masked ball given by the Redners. They were new people, with loads of money, but they had satisfied the Charlestonians with the right sort of "letters," and from all I heard before the ball pretty nearly everybody who was anybody would be there.

I was made happy by several dances with Julie St. Loches.

In her reaction against Ferris the affection she had always felt for me promised to grow into something warmer. I was very happy.

Over the shining ballroom floor hung several miradors, or little balconies. These were dimly lighted. When Julie was claimed by another partner, I drifted toward one of these balconies. Thinking I saw Ferris in one of their dim recesses, I touched a switch controlling the mirador lights. Instantly the figure of Ferris sprang into plain view.

He sat inside the railing of the mirador, his face propped on his hands, his eyes staring out into space. Of what new devilment in manuscripts was he thinking?

His silks and satins glistened sleekly in the flashing lights. The order on his breast gave back the rays in iridescent splendor.

But what was that which flashed back the light in a different way, that tongue that ran from Ferris's mouth, that pointed, glittering tongue the color of steel, and not the wholesome red of flesh and blood?

As I gazed, a sudden shudder swept me. I pounced on the mask nearest me, a man picturesquely dressed as the Duke of Buckingham of James I's time, and of course heavily masked.

"In the name of God!" I gasped at his ear, "look at Ferris—up there in the mirador!"

The man looked. He started violently, or affected to start, stood still an instant, intently regarding the mirador, then flung off my grasp and plunged into the whirling crowd of dancers.

I laid hands on the next nearest, a small man dressed as a Pierrot.

"What the devil!" he squeaked, as I hauled him aside. It was Mr. Redner's voice.

"The devil has certainly been at work here," I retorted dryly, still shaken with horror. "Look at Ferris's mouth—up there, man—in the mirador!"

Redner looked. He staggered, then gasped at my ear:

"Why, my God, the man's dead! Murdered! Run through by a short sword from the base of the neck. That is what's catching the light—the steel points. Oh, my heavens—our first ball! How notorious! This will ruin us in Charleston. People are so damned fussy here! Oh, Montaigne—what shall I do?"

I pulled my own scattered wits together.

"Didn't you tell me the detective Woolrich is among your guests tonight?"

"Yes—but they don't know about his fad for such work. I never liked it. Not my style at all, y' know. But he's my wife's cousin and she——"

I cut him short.

"Get Woolrich! Quick!"

He vanished. I slid forward for the mirador, only to find a man in domino hurrying beside me.

"I'm Rossigny," he said. "I heard you two. Want me to come?"

"Surely! Hurry before this butterfly crowd gets wise!"

Through the crowd and up the stairs we fled, only to receive at the door of the mirador another shock.

For there, crouched moaning and whimpering, a bloody handkerchief in her hand, dressed in a page's suit, a Spanish-featured, handsome woman, half mad with fear and horror, cowered. It was Zelee, the dancer, wailing to herself:

"Oh—oh, how could he! Killing himself like that!"

We stared at her a moment, then hurried into the mirador. As we gazed in horrified observation at the dead man, Rossigny found voice to say dryly:

"A fat lot he killed himself!" If there's one thing a suicide simply couldn't do, it's run himself through the back of the neck with a sword! Gee, what a ghastly sight!"

I didn't touch Ferris, who was obviously dead some little while. I hurried outside to Zelee Montez and pulled her to her feet, demanding:

"Why d'you say Ferris killed himself?"

"I tell you I saw him kill himself!" she gasped, shaking in every limb.

"I c—came to this dance t—t—to watch him. I h—hadn't any invitation, of course. B—but at a masked ball——"

"Anybody can slip in, anything happen. I know that. But do compose yourself a moment. How could Ferris kill himself in such a way?"

"He—he, oh God, I'll never forget! I had just crept up to the mirador door when he sprang out from behind the heavy curtains and ran that sword through his neck—and——"

She collapsed on a velvet couch near by. I stood in utter bewilderment, only to hear a quiet voice behind me:

"Evidently, Mr. Montaigne, the murder was done by a mask who was Ferris's counterpart. I can see through the door here that Mr. Ferris was dressed as the famous 'Steenie,' Duke of Buckingham—"

I started, glanced at Ferris, realized that he did have on "Steenie's" garb.

"Good God," I cried, "then I've spoken to his murderer!"

Sharply he drew from me the details. Redner was just behind him, so my host also heard them and accepted instantly Woolrich's order for the three of us to scatter through the house and find Buckingham, II—if we could.

We did *not* find Buckingham II, you may depend on that, though we made an exhaustive search, in the course of which Redner called up Inspector Gaynes. The body of Ferris was left untouched for him.

I will pass over the waves of horror and excitement which rippled through the house when the truth was known.

The Inspector arrived almost immediately. The guests were halted in the house, and when the body was laid in a quiet room the Inspector busied himself in a stern effort to find the murderer.

He got little out of the terrified though now coherent Montez, except her reiteration that she saw what seemed Ferris' own self kill himself, though now of course she realized it was simply a case of similar masks.

She admitted that she was very jealous of Ferris, and had followed him to see if she couldn't reawaken his interest in her.

At this point Mr. Redner's valet came nervously forward and timidly said he could identify the sword used on Mr. Ferris.

Questioned immediately by the Inspector, he said he had seen a man testing his sword in the cloak room. No, at that time he didn't know who the mask was. But he noticed the man's sword hand. The upper half of the little finger was gone.

Julie, standing close to me, turned on me startled eyes. We both knew well just such a hand.

The Inspector drove his question at the valet:

"You know now who the man was?"

"Yes, sir. Because I recognize the costume and the hand and the face is unmasked now."

"Point him out."

"It's M—Major St. Loches, sir."

Zelee Montez, leaning white-faced against

a column amid the brilliantly dressed but ignominously herded guests, now sprang forward:

"Henry St. Loches! You—could do that? Could murder Clyde for petty jealousy? Could——"

Major St. Loches came up to the Inspector, a gallant figure in his costume of D'Artagnan. But why hadn't he moved forward the moment the valet began to speak? Now he cried, angrily, at the dancer:

"Don't dare accuse me of murder! I did wear a sword just like the one that killed Ferris. But if mine killed him, it was because the murderer, or some one for the murderer, stole it from me in the cloak room, where I laid it down while I fastened a rip in my doublet."

"Does any one here know of any trouble between Major St. Loches and this Mr. Ferris?" demanded the Inspector urgently. "I call on you all for information, in the name of justice, and that the innocent may be protected."

Lord help us! How the whole scene about that damnable novel flashed back into my vision! How clearly I heard the old man again, threatening Ferris that his grandson would bring him to terms.

Julie's face paled, but into utter inexpression. Neither of us spoke. It was, to my horror, Rossigny who came forward. I reckon he was right, but——

Anyway, he repeated all he had overheard, and demanded of Major St. Loches whether he could deny he had threatened Ferris with death if he didn't promise to withdraw "Who Plays With Fire."

St. Loches whitened in a ghastly way.

Stammeringly he admitted all Rossigny said, adding anxiously that he was only trying to frighten Ferris into being decent.

But his eyes rolled nervously as he spoke. Rossigny's testimony was plainly a horrible shock to him.

The Inspector looked at him grimly.

"Major, the very handkerchief that wiped"—ironically—"the blood from that sword point, the handkerchief Montez picked up—was yours!"

"But he never dropped it there! Some one stole it from him," Julie cried in passionately loyal devotion. She ran to her brother and flung warm, sweet arms around him.

"Henry, you're innocent! I know it!"

"Of c—course I'm innocent," he stammered. But his eyes had an odd, hunted look—for a guiltless man.

What followed was inevitable. Major St. Loches was arrested for murder, and refused bail.

Charleston rang with the whole affair.

Hartley & Hartley, delighted with all this free advertising, rushed for the manuscript.

It was gone!

Wild with indignation, they sent a detective down for the carbon.

Only a few charred fragments remained in the dead author's grate. Yet certainly *he* had not burned it.

Had the girl with the squeaky voice stolen the manuscript from Hartley & Hartley? Perhaps! Had she slipped down South and burnt the carbon? Perhaps! I told no one but Woolrich of my theory, and I only told him because he had, at Julie's implorations, taken up the case. He echoed my perhaps as he and I searched Ferris's rooms the day after the annoyed New York detective left—in which search we found nothing.

Woolrich made the St. Loches home his headquarters.

To say he searched *that* house is putting it with extreme mildness, and we all tried to help—though none of us knew what he was looking for.

It was the soft-footed valet who ventured to inquire what he specially sought.

"I'm looking for the man who killed Author Ferris," Woolrich said grimly, "and tonight I'll be in a position to tell you all who it was."

"That Miss Montez, sir?" ventured the valet timidly.

Woolrich shrugged.

"You'll be there and hear it all, Collins, this evening. Your devotion deserves that."

I'll never forget that evening in old Mr. St. Loches's library.

The Inspector was there, eyeing Woolrich with covert resentment. Julie was

there, Rossigny, Mr. St. Loches, with Collins at his back, and myself.

Woolrich, standing at the fireplace, an elbow on the mantel, looked at us quietly. Then he said slowly:

"Friends, I needn't keep you waiting. Major St. Loches is innocent."

Julie sprang up.

"Oh, thank God!"

"Aren't your thanks premature?" the Inspector asked grimly. Then to Woolrich:

"Mr. Woolrich, it's easier to say the Major is guiltless than to tell us another who may be guilty."

"Pardon me! There are no maybes. Ferris was killed by the mask known as the second Duke of Buckingham."

Mr. St. Loches started violently.

Was it from sheer nervousness? Certainly these had been demoralizing days.

Collins looked uneasily at his master.

Rossigny moved nervously. Julie cried hurriedly:

"But nobody knows——"

"Dear Miss St. Loches, you shall hear just what occurred," Woolrich interrupted. "In my searchings I found on the base of that bust of George Washington yonder, under the edge of it, a spot of sticky substance."

"Blood!" I muttered.

"Not at all," said Woolrich with a grim smile. "Hair pomade! Moreover, the heavy bust, whose pedestal rested directly on a polished surface, had recently been moved. Miscroscopic examination of the dust showed that. Moreover a tiny marble chip had recently been glued on the bust."

"That's true, sir," ventured the valet, "and——"

But Woolrich interrupted him, turning to his master.

The night of the mirado murder, you, Mr. St. Loches, were absent——"

"Doesn't my alibi——"

"Your alibi makes you O. K., sir. But I'm asking, didn't you leave your valet reading in the library on the ground floor? Didn't you order him to stay there?"

"Yes, I did," the old gentleman said sharply, "and if you're trying to get Collins into trouble you'll make a fool of yourself. That murder was before twelve o'clock and my neighbors across the way all testified they saw Collins quietly reading there by my lamp until midnight, when *I* came in and found him there myself. A more faithful, quieter fellow never existed."

"The neighbors certainly believed they saw Collins," Woolrich observed significantly.

"I tell you they did, sir," roared Mr. St. Loches, "and a little messenger boy who came with a wire from Collins's cousin in Savannah testifies that he went in and delivered the wire to Collins."

"No! He delivered the wire to a person whose profile is the counterpart of Collins—a person now in the room—who was decked out in Collins's hat and coat. Can you guess?"

Our astonished glances roved wildly at the words. Suddenly my eyes rested on the benign acquiline profile of the George Washington life-size bust—it was a dead ringer for Collins!

"Mr. Woolrich, I protest," the valet cried vehemently. But the words died in his throat as Woolrich called:

"Come in here, Quirks."

"Quirks" sidled in, his fists in two teary eyes—a boy of about thirteen.

"I doan wanter come in," he wailed. "Youse done made me double-cross me best friend! I'm scared outer me wits. I'm——"

"You dirty little devil!" Collins flared out loudly, then with an amazing change to quiet deference.

"Mr. Woolrich, sir, a man may play a joke and no harm done. I see that through the resemblance and a speck of hair pomade out of my hat on the bust head you caught on. But, sir, I had a date—that night——"

"Wasn't it with Zelee Montez, the dancer, who had fooled you into wasting several thousand dollars on her without giving value received?"

Collins uttered a strange sound.

"How Zelee Montez makes fools of so many men is a mystery to me!" Woolrich said slowly. "All sorts and conditions of men! I found the ring you hid, Collins, the ring with the dancer's hair inside of

the secret, tiny ring—receptacle. I found with it one of her meaningless messages to you—just as you doubtless found one of her scrawls to Major St. Loches. He tells me she never interested him. So she ran after him, as such spoiled women often run after the unattainable. St. Loches was innocent, but you hated him because he drew her interest. Then you found that the author was your rival *de facto*. How cunningly you planned it all!"

The valet whirled from behind his master's chair.

"Planned what?" he asked in a low, curiously vibrant voice. "You're not going to dare to say I killed Mr. Ferris?"

Slowly, implacably, like the voice of unshaken eternal justice, the tones of Woolrich answered him:

"I say, Collins, that *you* stole the D'Artagnan sword to incriminate a man you hated second to Ferris. You, having every opportunity, stole Major St. Loches's handkerchief to incriminate him further. With your counterpart at the window, and an ally you thought you owned body and soul in the boy, you slipped off to the ball as another Buckingham. You crawled in a window that caught a shred of your satin on a nail. Boldly you mingled with the dancers, watching, always watching, for Ferris. The author did what he frequently used to do—he got away from the crowd to watch them and absorb "color" for another story. You followed. Cat-footed, you hid in the curtains. After you, knowing nothing of your presence, crept the dancer. And Ferris, looking down at the scene, dreamed on of another novel, writing in his mind's eye some brilliant, daring story of the ball.

"Behind him Evil Love stood—in the dancer.

"Behind him Death stood—in you.

"And he did not know it. He dreamed on, while Love and Hate breathlessly watched him, unconscious of each other.

"But Hate moved first—and, fast as a light ray out drove the sword, its hilt in a powerful hand. I doubt if Ferris tasted death. He only knew sudden oblivion.

"Swiftly you bent over him, bloodied, and flung down Major St. Loches's handkerchief, seized the dead man's keys and vanished from the mirador. Speedily, swiftly you hurried to Ferris's room; as Ferris himself you gained entrance. Hadn't he left in that costume? For the master you loved you burned the carbon of the novel as carefully as your unconscious ally, the reader, burned the other. Then up into an inverted light globe for indirect lighting you flung the keys, where I found them—just as I found your fingerprints on a scrap of the paper. Carbon makes them with fatal ease. Now into the night you fled, cloaked your costume, got safely into your master's home—he found you reading when he came in. But Zelee Montez was there in the mirador. She saw——"

"Then this is all *her* work!" screamed Collins frantically. "This is *her* work. At least I'll settle with her, as I did with that damned Ferris who——"

He made a dash for the balcony window, and was gone into the night like a raging tiger. We barely got the dancer on the phone in time to save her.

But Collins made a second getaway and was never heard of again.

I need scarcely add that the facts were given to the public and St. Loches set free. Meantime the yellow journals used the whole affair joyously as copy—running headlines from which the St. Locheses simply fled to Europe. But they couldn't shake *me*. I went along—I did. I went in pursuit of Julie's distressed little heart—and I won it.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachelor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Snarks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Ringold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by C. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by H. Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by E. Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thomas J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Anderson
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. F. Oursler.
77 "The Little White Room," by Edmund Jones.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by W. Rotoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "The Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89 "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. F. Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Bechdolt.
95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Lost Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.
99 "The Cross," by W. S. Ingram.
100 "The Secret Service Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier.
101 "A Crimson Price," by Elliott Lester.
102 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by G. Jacobs.
103 "A Museum Mystery," by Jack Bechdolt.
104 "The Little Red Book," by J. Alexander Young.
105 "A Man from Siam," by Chas. F. Oursler.
106 "The Clue of the Emerald Ring," by B. Poynter.
107 "Hell's Hinges," by Hamilton Craigie.
108 "The Wolf," by Katherine Stagg.
109 "The Brass Button," by Jack Bechdolt.
110 "A Whispering Mummy," by Chas. F. Oursler.
111 "Trapping the Jewel Smugglers," by B. Poynter.
112 "The Missing Evidence," by Harold F. Podhaski.
113 "A Clue by Radio," by Capt. Jack Static.
114 "The District Attorney's Secret," by C. Oursler.
115 "A Man From Headquarters," by H. Craigie.
116 "The Girl in the Case," by Carl Glick.
117 "A Scientific Detective," by D. G. McDonald.
118 "Number Nine Queer Street," by Jack Bechdolt.
119 "Trailed by a Private Detective," by Gottlieb Jacobs.
120 "The Mouse Trap," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
121 "A Radio Mystery," by Capt. Jack Static
122 "The Clawing Death," by Beulah Poynter.
123 "A Master of Millions," by Chas. Fulton Oursler
124 "The Secret of Room 13," by Hamilton Craigie.
125 "Six Months to Live," by George Bronson-Howard.
126 "Seals of Wax," by Jack Bechdolt.
127 "When Crooks Conspire," by Harold F. Podhaski.
128 "The Mystery of the Blue Car," by H. Craigie.
129 "The Detective and the Law," by Frederick F. Shuey.
130 "The Hand in the Dark," by Chas. F. Oursler.
131 "The Trail of a Rogue," by George Bronson-Howard.
132 "The Woman from Nowhere," by Jack Bechdolt
133 "The Time Detective," by Frank Blighton.
134 "The Whispering-Room," by Frederick C. Davis.
135 "One Clue Missing," by Chas. F. Oursler.
136 "The Doom of the Damned," by Joe Burke.
137 "The Consuming Death," by Gilbert Hammond.
138 "Mrs. Deane's Jewels," by Beatrice S. Luisi.
139 "The Brass Voice," by Jack Bechdolt.
140 "For Shame," by Wm. Hamilton Osborne.
141 "The Triple Cross," by Hamilton Craigie.
142 "Blood Rubies," by J. Werner Pfelps.
143 "I'll Win! I'll Win!" by Arthur B. Reeve and Margaret W. Reeve.

If you cannot procure any of the numbers you want from your newsdealer, send us the price, ten cents, in money or postage stamps, and we will mail them to you postage free.

HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d Street, New York City, N. Y.

Our Ten-Cent Hand Books

Useful, Instructive, and Amusing. They contain Valuable Information on Almost Every Subject.

No. 1. NAPOLEON'S ORACULUM AND DREAM BOOK. — Containing the great oracle of human destiny; also the true meaning of almost any kind of dreams, together with charms, ceremonies, and curious games of cards.

No. 2. HOW TO DO TRICKS. — The great book of magic and card tricks, containing full instruction on all the leading card tricks of the day, also the most popular magical illusions as performed by our leading magicians; every boy should obtain a copy of this book.

No. 3. HOW TO FLIRT. — The arts and wiles of flirtation are fully explained by this little book. Besides the various methods of handkerchief, fan, glove, parasol, window and hat flirtation, it contains a full list of the language and sentiment of flowers.

No. 4. HOW TO DANCE is the title of this little book. It contains full instructions in the art of dancing, etiquette in the ballroom and at parties, how to dress, and full directions for calling off in all popular square dances.

No. 5. HOW TO MAKE LOVE.—A complete guide to love, courtship and marriage, giving sensible advice, rules and etiquette to be observed, with many curious and interesting things not generally known.

No. 6. HOW TO BECOME AN ATHLETE.—Giving full instructions for the use of dumbbells, Indian clubs, parallel bars, horizontal bars and various other methods of developing a good, healthy muscle; containing over sixty illustrations.

No. 7. HOW TO KEEP BIRDS.—Handsomely illustrated and containing full instructions for the management and training of the canary, mockingbird, bobolink, blackbird, paroquet, parrot, etc.

No. 9. HOW TO BECOME A VENTRILOQUIST. —By Harry Kennedy. Every intelligent boy reading this book of instructions can master the art, and create any amount of fun for himself and friends. It is the greatest book ever published.

No. 10. HOW TO BOX.—The art of self-defense made easy. Containing over thirty illustrations of guards, blows, and the different positions of a good boxer. Every boy should obtain one of these useful and instructive books, as it will teach you how to box without an instructor.

No. 11. HOW TO WRITE LOVE-LETTERS.—A most complete little book, containing full directions for writing love-letters, and when to use them, giving specimen letters for young and old.

No. 12. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS TO LADIES.—Giving complete instructions for writing letters to ladies on all subjects; also letters of introduction, notes and requests.

No. 13. HOW TO DO IT; or, BOOK OF ETIQUETTE. — It is a great life secret, and one that every young man desires to know all about. There's happiness in it.

No. 14. HOW TO MAKE CANDY. — A complete hand-book for making all kinds of candy, ice-creams, syrups, essences, etc., etc.

No. 17. HOW TO DRESS.—Containing full information in the art of dressing and appearing well at home and abroad, giving the selections of colors, material, and how to have them made up.

No. 18. HOW TO BECOME BEAUTIFUL. — One of the brightest and most valuable little books ever given to the world. Everybody wishes to know how to become beautiful, both male and female. The secret is simple, and almost costless.

No. 20. HOW TO ENTERTAIN AN EVENING PARTY. — A complete compendium of games, sports, card diversions, comic recitations, etc., suitable for parlor or drawing-room entertainment. It contains more for the money than any book published.

No. 21. HOW TO HUNT AND FISH. — The most complete hunting and fishing guide ever published. It contains full instructions about guns, hunting dogs, traps, trapping and fishing, together with description of game and fish.

No. 23. HOW TO EXPLAIN DREAMS. — This little book gives the explanation to all kinds of dreams, together with lucky and unlucky days.

No. 26. HOW TO ROW, SAIL AND BUILD A BOAT. — Fully illustrated. Full instructions are given in this little book, together with instructions on swimming and riding, companion sports to boating.

No. 28. HOW TO TELL FORTUNES.—Every one is desirous of knowing what his future life will bring forth, whether happiness or misery, wealth or poverty. You can tell by a glance at this little book. Buy one and be convinced.

No. 29. HOW TO BECOME AN INVENTOR. — Every boy should know how inventions originated. This book explains them all, giving examples in electricity, hydraulics magnetism, optics, pneumatics, mechanics, etc.

No. 33. HOW TO BEHAVE. — Containing the rules and etiquette of good society and the easiest and most approved methods of appearing to good advantage at parties, balls, the theatre, church, and in the drawing-room.

No. 35. HOW TO PLAY GAMES. — A complete and useful little book, containing the rules and regulations of billiards, bagatelle, back-gammon, croquet, dominoes, etc.

No. 36. HOW TO SOLVE CONUNDRUMS.—Containing all the leading conundrums of the day, amusing riddles, curious catches and witty sayings.

No. 40. HOW TO MAKE AND SET TRAPS. — Including hints on how to catch moles, weasels, otter, rats, squirrels and birds. Also how to cure skins. Copiously illustrated.

No. 41. THE BOYS OF NEW YORK END MEN'S JOKE BOOK. — Containing a great variety of the latest jokes used by the most famous end men. No amateur minstrels is complete without this wonderful little book.

No. 42. THE BOYS OF NEW YORK STUMP SPEAKER. — Containing a varied assortment of Stump speeches, Negro, Dutch and Irish. Also end men's jokes. Just the thing for home amusement and amateur shows.

No. 45. THE BOYS OF NEW YORK MINSTREL GUIDE AND JOKE BOOK. — Something new and very instructive. Every boy should obtain this book, as it contains full instructions for organizing an amateur minstrel troupe.

No. 46. HOW TO MAKE AND USE ELECTRICITY.—A description of the wonderful uses of electricity and electro magnetism; together with full instructions for making Electric Toys, Batteries, etc. By George Trebel, A. M., M. D. Containing over fifty illustrations.

No. 48. HOW TO BUILD AND SAIL CANOES. —A handy book for boys, containing full directions for constructing canoes and the most popular manner of sailing them. Fully illustrated.

No. 49. HOW TO DEBATE. — Giving rules for conducting debates, outlines for debates, questions for discussion and the best sources for procuring information on the questions given.

No. 50. HOW TO STUFF BIRDS AND ANIMALS. — A valuable book, giving instructions in collecting, preparing, mounting and preserving birds, animals and insects.

No. 51. HOW TO DO TRICKS WITH CARDS. — Containing explanations of the general principles of sleight-of-hand applicable to card tricks; of card tricks with ordinary cards, and not requiring sleight-of-hand; of tricks involving sleight-of-hand, or the use of specially prepared cards. Illustrated.

No. 53. HOW TO WRITE LETTERS. — A wonderful little book, telling you how to write to your sweetheart, your father, mother, sister, brother, employer; and in fact, everybody and anybody you wish to write to.

For sale by all newsdealers, or will be sent to any address on receipt of price, 10c. per copy, in money or stamps, by

HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc.
166 West 23d Street, New York City

ROGERS DEVELOPING POWDERS
makes latent fingerprints visible, indelible and acid proof. Two-ounce container with directions, prepaid $1.00.
The Rogers Laboratory
880 No. Exchange Street, St. Paul, Minn.

OLD MONEY WANTED
$2 to $500 EACH paid for hundreds of Old Coins dated before 1895. Keep ALL old or odd money. Send 10 cts. for New Ill's Coin Value Book, 4x6. You may have valuable coins. Get Posted. We pay cash.
CLARKE COIN CO., Ave. 13, Le Roy, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE

Earn Big Money Travel Big Demand
Experience unnecessary. We train you. Write
AMERICAN DETECTIVE SYSTEM,
1968 Broadway New York City

INVENTIONS commercialized on cash or royalty basis. Patented or unpatented. Write Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 286, St. Louis, Mo.

EARN $110 to $250 monthly—expenses paid as Railway Traffic Inspector. Position guaranteed after completion of 3 months' home study course or money refunded. Excellent opportunities. Write for Free Booklet G-132.
Standard Business Training Institute
Buffalo, N. Y.

Are You Lonesome? Write Eva Moore, Box 908, Jacksonville, Fla. Stamp Appreciated.

Just Send the Coupon

I will send you on Ten Days' Free Trial a pair of my famous "True Fit" Shell Rim Spectacles. Hundreds of thousands now in use everywhere. These splendid Glasses will enable anyone to read the smallest print, thread the finest needle, to **See Far or Near** and prevent eyestrain or headaches. If after trying them for 10 days and nights you are amazed and delighted, and think them equal to glasses sold elsewhere at $16.00, send only $4.98; if you don't want to keep them, return them and there will be no charge. **Send no money; Pay no C. O. D.;** simply your name, address and age. A beautiful velveteen lined, gold lettered Spectacle Case FREE.

------ Cut and Mail Coupon Today ------

U. S. SPECTACLE CO.
1526 W. Adams St., Chicago, Ill., Dept. A296
Send me a pair of your spectacles on 10-day free trial. If I like them I will pay you **$4.98**; if not, I will return them and there will be no charge.

Name..... **Age**.....

St. & No..... **Box No**..... **R.F.D. No**....

Post Office..... **State**.....

MORPHINE
New Home Treatment
Send Stamp for Book of Information
DR. QUAYLE'S SANITARIUM
MADISON, OHIO. DEPT. S 31

She Found A Pleasant Way To Reduce Her Fat

Thousands of overfat people have greatly reduced their weight and attained a normal figure by following the advice of many others who use and recommend **Marmola Prescription Tablets.** These harmless little fat reducers are prepared in tablet form from the same ingredients that formerly composed the famous Marmola Prescription **for fat reduction.**

If you are too fat, you owe it to yourself to give these fat reducers a fair trial. All the better drug stores the world over sell **Marmola Prescription Tablets** at one dollar per package. Ask your druggist for them or send one dollar to the Marmola Co., 631 Garfield Bldg., Detroit, Mich. and secure a package of these tablets. They are harmless and reduce your weight without going through long sieges of tiresome exercise, starvation diet, or the application of absurd greases and salves. If you are too fat **try this today.**

Sell Us Your Spare Time—You can earn Fifteen to Fifty dollars weekly writing showcards at home. No canvassing; pleasant profitable profession, easily, quickly learned by our simple graphic block system; artistic ability unnecessary; we instruct you and supply work. Wilson Methods, Limited, Dept. Y, Toronto, Canada.

ROGERS DEVELOPING POWDERS
Makes latent prints visible; by heating they become indelible and acid proof. Two-ounce container with directions, prepaid $1.00.
THE ROGERS LABORATORY
380 N. Exchange St., St. Paul, Minn.

EARN $20 weekly spare time, at home, addressing, mailing music, circulars. Send 10c for music, information. **American Music Co., 1658 Broadway, Dept. 31-Z, New York.**

Get Rid of Your FAT

A trial treatment, together with my booklet on Obesity, as well as my special "PAY-WHEN-REDUCED" offer, sent FREE on request.

I am a licensed practising physician and have successfully treated thousands of patients for fat reduction without subjecting them to change of diet or unnecessary exercise. My patients have often reduced at the rate of a pound a day, and are to-day in better health than ever before. Let me send you more proof at my expense.
DR. R. NEWMAN, Licensed Physician,
State of New York, 286 Fifth Ave.,
New York, Desk C-40

$90 Drafting Course Free

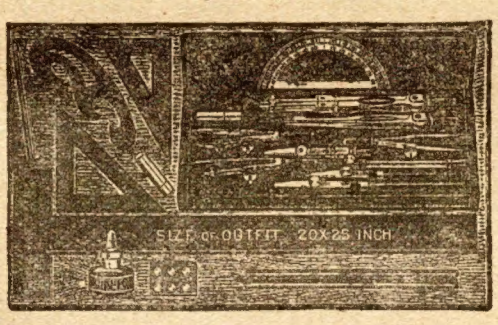
There is such an urgent demand for practical, trained Drasftsmen that I am making this special offer in order to enable deserving, ambitious and bright men to get into this line of work. I will teach you to become a Draftsman and Designer, until you are **drawing a salary of $250.00 a month.** You need not pay me for my personal instruction or for the complete set of instruments.

$250 a Month

Starting salary according to my agreement and guarantee. Draftsmen's work is pleasant and profitable. Positions are open paying $3,600.00 a year in the best surroundings. They are open everywhere. Thousands of men are needed who have just the kind of training I will give you. You can get this training during spare time in your own home.

Mail the Coupon

for my valuable book — **"Succesful Draftsmanship."** It explains how YOU can become a Successful Draftsman in a short time. The book is free at present, so write **AT ONCE.**



Earn While Learning

You can be earning a handsome income while learning at home. This is a special offer I am making. Absolutely no obligations of any kind in sending coupon. But you must write at once, as I limit the number of my students.

Mail the FREE Coupon at once for my book—*"Successful Draftsmanship,"* also list of open positions and for the free offer to be earning good money at once while learning at home. This offer is limited and in order to benefit thereby — **act at once.**

Chief Draftsman Dobe
1951 Lawrence Ave., Div. 14-78, Chicago, Ill.

Chief Draftsman Will Train You Personally

on practical Drafting-room work **Until** you are competent and **Until** you are in a permanent position at a salary paying at least $250 per month. This is an exceptional opportunity for a few selected ambitious men, between the ages of 16 and 50 whom I will train personally.

Send the Coupon

or a letter and let me tell you how you can become a Draftsman in your spare time and earn a good salary. Don't delay — send the coupon at once.

I Guarantee
To instruct you **until** competent and in a permanent paying position at a regular Draftsman's salary of at least $250 per month and guarantee to furnish you **free** complete Draftsman's working outfit at once from the start.

FREE—this $25.00 Draftsman's Working Outfit

These are regular working instruments, the kind I use myself. I give them free to you if you enroll at once. **Send the Free Coupon today.**

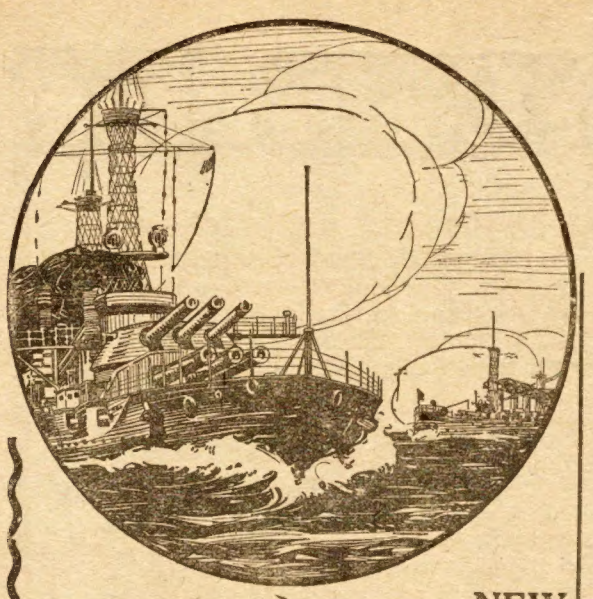
Free Course Offer Coupon
Chief Draftsman Dobe
1951 Lawrence Ave. Div. 14-78 Chicago

Without any obligation to me please mail your book, "Successful Draftsmanship" and full particulars of your liberal "Personal Instruction" offer to a few students. It is understood I am obligated in no way whatever.

Name.....

Address.....

.....*Age*



A Real Moving Picture Show In Your Own Home

NEW ELECTRIC MODEL

Remember, this is a Genuine Moving Picture Machine and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct.

The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism, consisting of an eight-wheel movement, etc. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light to three or four feet in area.

It is not a toy; it is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places and people, which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it is used.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.

Read These Letters From Happy Boys

SHOWS CLEAR PICTURES

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

SOLD HIS FOR $10.00 AND ORDERED ANOTHER

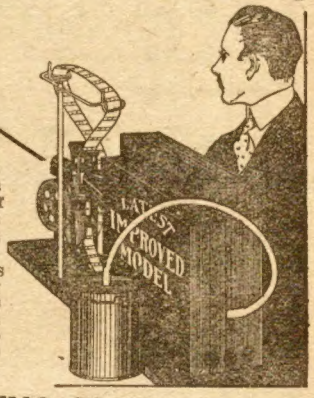
Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ehereth, Mandan, N. Dak.

WOULD NOT GIVE AWAY FOR $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $25.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 34.

BETTER THAN A $12.00 MACHINE

I am slow about turning in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is all right. I have had it a long time and it has not been broken yet. I have seen a $12.00 Machine but would not swap mine for it. Robert Lineberry, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.



HOW YOU CAN GET THIS GREAT MOVING PICTURE MACHINE — READ MY WONDERFUL OFFER TO YOU

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail today. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as "Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"—"Washington at Home" —"Battle of Lake Erie," etc. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 30-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $6.00. Send the $6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

A. E. FLEMING, Sec'y,
615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 212, New York

PLEASE USE COUPON

Free Coupon

Good for Moving Picture Offer

Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

A. E. FLEMING, Secy.,
615 W. 43d St., Dept. 212, New York

BE SURE TO READ

"Moving Picture Stories"

A Weekly Magazine Devoted to Photoplays and Players.

PRICE SEVEN CENTS PER COPY

The Best Film Magazine on Earth

FOR SALE ON ALL NEWS-STANDS.

Magnificent Colored Cover Portraits of Prominent Screen Performers!

32 PAGES OF READING **OUT EVERY FRIDAY**

Each Number Contains Portraits and Biographies of Actors and Actresses—Four Stories of the Best Films on the Screens—Elegant Half-tone Scenes from the Plays—Interesting Articles About Prominent People in the Films—Doings of Actors and Actresses in the Studios—Lessons in Scenario Writing—Poems, Jokes and every bright Feature of Interest in Making Moving Pictures.

THIS LITTLE MAGAZINE GIVES YOU MORE FOR YOUR MONEY THAN ANY OTHER SIMILAR PUBLICATION ON THE MARKET.

Its authors are the very best that money can procure; its profuse illustrations are exquisite, and its special articles are by the greatest experts in their particular line. No amount of money is spared to make this publication the very best of its kind in the world. Buy a copy NOW from your newsdealer, or send 7 cents in money or postage-stamps, and we will mail you, postage free, any issue you desire.

HARRY E. WOLFF, Publisher, Inc., 166 West 23d Street, New York City